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A character pose of
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MISS ANTOINETTE PERRY



"Now, remember, you've given your word and can't go back on it"

To accompany

"What the Buyer Bought"—page 241

THE RED BOOK

MAGAZINE

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The Men Who Can't Come Back

by

James de Conlay

Note.—The author of this deeply human article, whose portrait appears above, has wandered along the Edge of Things for fourteen years. In the most remote corners of the world he has encountered Americans who for one reason or another may not, with safety to themselves, return to the Home Land. It is of some of these strange meetings that he concerns himself in this article, singularly appropriate to the Christmas season, when the eyes of all men turn toward Home.—*The Editor.*



HERE is no moon. The lights of two bridges string out over the river-bed and where they fall short of meeting, a man skulks stealthily. Cautiously he proceeds, selecting the darkest spots for passage-way. Descending the bank with never a backward glance he leaves Juarez behind and enters on the most difficult part of his strange journey. He is now in the bed of the Rio Grande, dried up and pebble paved. Reaching one of the stakes erected half-way across the river as international boundary-posts, he crouches and pauses, peering intently into the night, as if to penetrate the darkness immediately ahead. Another step and he is in the home-land—on the soil of the United States. Before him El Paso flattens out on a wide sandy plain, the residences and business-streets dark and sleeping, the doors of the dance-halls and saloons in "the reservation" opening and closing in incessant swing. The window-lights gleam tiny welcomes across the sand. Holding to the stake he turns furtively to the bridges at right and left, where belated pedestrians are slowly crossing, and customs-officers peer down into the black river-bed beneath.

No *contrabandista* is he. All his caution, all his Indian-like stealth, all the risk he runs, are neither for gold nor revenge, but for the mere chance to gain the one corner of the United States that offers certain welcome and uncertain security; to mingle for a moment with his kind, to speak again the language of his



*The watch-dogs of the Rio Grande, trailers of
the Men Who Can't Come Back who stealthily haunt the Mexican border*

mother, and to breathe an air long since forfeited. For he is of the exiles: a wanderer who has lost his birthright of citizenship, for whom the Law, argus-eyed, watches at every gateway. Foot by foot he makes his way toward the glaring electric-sign of a dance-hall. Finally, after a moment's tense listening, he rises to his full height for a dash past the huts to the welcoming door.

Instantly a figure looms up from behind a sand dune, and the challenge "Who is that?" cuts into the night like a knife. Shaking in one huge sob of disappointment, the man bends double and flees swiftly back to the sanctuary of the boundary-stake. A mocking laugh follows him. It is an old story to the policeman standing sentinel at the sand hill; so many times before has his challenge halted the Wanderers—the Men Who Can't Come Back!

For to the ends of the world stretches the Lonesome Trail, which for all its rare meetings, its indefinite windings, is tighter packed with human tragedy than all the busy markets and gathering places of men. It commences where the crowds are: at the stock-ticker, the cashier's cage, the club-room, the faithless hearth, the race-track. It leads to the rim of the world, out to the desert tent, the dusty veldt, the hermit cave, the foc's'les of craft tramping slow the outer seas; and it ends in six feet of alien soil, or a weighted canvas shroud sunk in a foreign ocean. He who takes it must travel alone, and no man who flees along its dusty course may come back.

What becomes of these wanderers along the Lonesome Trail—these Men Who Can't Come Back? How do they live their lives; how tolerate their enforced exile? Not many years ago the absconder merely jumped aboard the Canadian Express to reach safety in a few hours; but latterly, the United States has been



The cowboy police of Juarez who frequently work with the rangers across the river in delivering American fugitives

adding to her extradition treaties so that security is now only found in the crowded *sokos* of Arab cities, back in the African deserts, or in Tahiti and the Society Islands, in the teeming towns of China and Japan. Criminals of a certain type still make for the Mexican line, and eluding the police establish themselves in communities immediately across the border, as for instance at Juarez. There they become proprietors of dance-halls and gambling joints and are closely watched by the frontier police, who see that they do not come back. Uncle Sam has a comprehensive extradition treaty with Mexico, but to extradite a man costs a little money, and certain citizens are better away. In all the Mexican towns along the United States frontier are communities of exiled Americans, who may not come back to the Land of Heart's desire, spread out alluringly, and so near, and the greatest shame that these men suffer is the daily realization that they are not worth extradition money.

Here and there we obtain unexpected, photographic flashes, as it were, of the subconscious emotion that stirs the exiles for the land they have lost; that lifts their stories out of the commonplace and gives them an appeal of their own.

To Abuani, a Berber city south of the Atlas range, a man was wont to come down from the mountains on a periodic visit to barter for supplies. Many years before he had fled from a town in Virginia branded as a Cain. Since that time, with the exception of the first year, he had lived in a part of the world inaccessible to any save the hardest Berber mountaineers.

Dressed in the rags and tatters of a country Arab, supported by a huge staff and accompanied by a servant companion equally unkempt, he met me face to face, in the big *soko* of Abuani. As I



went by him he stood to one side, and only with great difficulty and a storm of remonstrance from his companion, was he prevented from approaching. Three times on that morning did we pass, and beyond mentally noting his long fervent gaze in my direction, I had no idea that he regarded me other than as a strange creature of strange garments and speech. Always, however, after I had passed, an angry argument ensued between the two.

In the afternoon, as I rode out of the city, the mountaineer sat waiting on a stone beyond the gates. At sight of me he sprang to his feet, started forward, stopped in sudden hesitation, and finally, throwing his staff to one side, rushed toward me and seized my leg in tight embrace. Hearing a noise behind, I turned to see his companion tearing down the road, calling and gesticulating wildly.

So far nothing but incoherent mumblings had come from the man at my side. Apparently, with great trouble he was endeavoring to speak, but the only word distinguishable was "America." By this time his companion had arrived and stood at the roadside truculently calling on the other to remember his dignity. Displaying a friendly attitude, and with some persuasion, I found out what the affair was about. My own man, knowing some of the Berber dialect, elicited fragments of the strange story.

The man at the saddle, still embracing my leg, the hair of his face hanging in long, lank, tear-clots, was an American who a great many years previous had killed a stepbrother in a Virginia city and had fled the country. Since his arrival in the Atlas regions he had not heard a word of English and in time all memory of the language had completely left him.

Throughout these years he had lived in a communal village of Berbers, the only person knowing anything of his early history being the disapproving companion at the roadside.

For half an hour I listened to the incoherent, interpreted story of his life in the mountains; of the intense longings for the homeland and the final despair in losing the mother-tongue.

Time pressed, and with great difficulty I parted from him. The exile, letting his head fall to my knee for several minutes, sobbed the last word left him of his language—of his country and religion: "America! America! America!"

Before turning the corner, round which was to disappear the only vision of the home-land he had had in a quarter of a century, I turned in my saddle and looked back. The old man was standing in the middle of the road, staff in hand, gazing after our retreating horses, unheeding his companion who, near by, stood at guard, eyeing him sternly.



A Mohammedan festival in Tangier, the haven of the Men Who Can't Come Back



An African city where safety from extradition pending arrangements with Morocco, awaits the Men Who Can't Come Back

Back of them nestled the little walled city, its soldiers just discernable at the gates; above, the great red sun was dropping down a copper-sky behind the loftiest peak of the Atlas Hills—the same sun that was slowly rising over Virginia.

But the Lonesome Trail does not always lead to solitude and madness; sometimes, rather, to teeming, careless cities, where forced and fervid pleasures are sought to drown what the Man may not forget.

It was the beach-hour in Tangier—the daily hour of life and color in all the indolent Eastern cities that loll by the seaside. But no beach offers such interests as that of Tangier.

The bazaars and markets were emptying their crowds through the gates to the beach below. Country-women were straggling home to mountain-villages beyond the headland. Surly Angera Arabs, with long rifles slung at the backs, galloped along with full picturesque accouterment.

Foreign colonies and diplomatic corps had sent out their prettiest women, superbly mounted and smartly gowned, to reinforce the Western color. Spanish *señoritas* in lace mantillas raced by, with excited cries urging their cunning little donkeys to faster pace; while strolling contemplatively along were small parties of Mosque students, praying-mats under their arms, unmindful entirely of their cosmopolitan surroundings.

Presently I was awakened from this delightful survey by the antics and shrill cries of an Arab urchin clearing the way and beating aside a horde of beggars and street gamins. He rushed past with shrill calls, "Balak! Balak!" (clear the way) and following him, mounted on a magnificent coal black Arab charger, as if emerging from the boulevards of Paris, rode a woman, beau-



Watching the Americans at Canton where
for many years the Men Who Can't Come Back have found a haven

tiful to look upon. Every glance she shot from right to left, even the poise of the neck and head, marked her as of France and of Paris. While not appearing to be in the least degree interested in the crowd of which she was easily the most conspicuous part, you instinctively realized that no one escaped her swift glance. When abreast of myself, her eyes met mine in cool calculation; for a moment she calmly contemplated me and I knew that I was being appraised. Then her eyes passed over my head to someone standing at my back, hitherto unobserved, and her expression changed to cold indifference. Compressing her lips slightly, she politely bowed, and in the way of French people called out: "*Bon jour, monsieur!*" urging her horse into an easy canter. No sooner had she passed out of sight, than I was surprised by a voice behind me crying in my ear, "You're next!" and I turned to find myself face to face with one of the Men Who Can't Come Back.

In a mocking silence he eyed me for a full minute, but back of his look I fancied a yearning for companionship.

"Reckon you wonder what I mean? Remember the barbers over in God's country? When they've hardly cleaned up the man in the chair, they call out to the fellow waiting 'round: 'You're next, sir!' Well, when that"—and he motioned towards the beach, "looks as she just looked at you, it amounts to the same thing."

Here was a man who wanted to talk. And here was a man who wanted to listen. We were well met; and I led the way to a café, where, encouraged by a glass of absinthe and a "real cigar," I heard the tale of that "Man Who Can't Come Back."

You know the story; it has been repeated again and again almost from the beginning. A tale of luring eyes, dusky pools of enchantment, a man's frail strength—a theft—flight, then here,



where the "new life" was begun, a life of license misconceived as love. The lure of the eyes waned and one day the man found himself cast high and dry upon the beach, a derelict washed ashore. All that was left to him was the longing that, try as they may to kill it, ever lives in the hearts of such as he.

Some of us who spend our lives adventuring 'round on the Edge were marooned on the West African coast at Christmas of last year. Rabat is a bar-port hidden behind a mountain of rock, and once inside there is no telling when the bar will let you out again. Out at sea, riding at a turbulent anchorage was our only hope—a French warship; nearer to the shore, plunging and straining for three months, and every few days losing an anchor, a small British freight-packet was waiting a chance to discharge a much needed cargo. Away to the north lay Tangier, an English hotel, and a Christmas-dinner. Seven days of dangerous caravanning among hostile tribes made that prospect far from alluring.

It looked a woeful Christmas for those of us out on the Edge; the tribes were threatening the city, and across the river, the fanatical guns of Sale menaced us. Few Europeans I knew had ever reached these points; but my attention had been directed to two Germans, who, I was told, years before had embraced the Arab life, religion, and costume, making their homes some distance from Rabat, speaking nothing but their adopted language, and maintaining extensive harems.

On Christmas morning, bent on exploration, I rode out to the ruined city of Shilah, and passing me on the way, in orthodox dress and magnificently mounted, was a blonde individual described by my servant as "one of the German converts." Apparently oblivious of my existence, he ambled swiftly by; but I had known the Orient long enough to realize that nothing about me had escaped his eager eyes. His face interested me for, despite his blonde complexion and red whiskers, it suggested more of Cincinnati than Berlin. Returning at noon to my house, a young Moorish courier handed me a note, saying he desired an answer. It was in a scrawling, unpracticed English hand and read: "Dear Sir: This is your Christmas-day. You are from America. I have been there, and know what this day means. Come and take a Moorish tea this afternoon in my garden on the Mequinez Road. I shall prepare for you and make your Christmas interesting."

The paper was blue, the envelope yellow, and the writing done with a thick red crayon; but no invitation ever looked so good to me. At three o'clock a servant riding a horse and leading another called; and thus under escort I rode out to my Christmas-party.



Many an American fugitive has won the sympathy of some dusky South Sea Islands belie

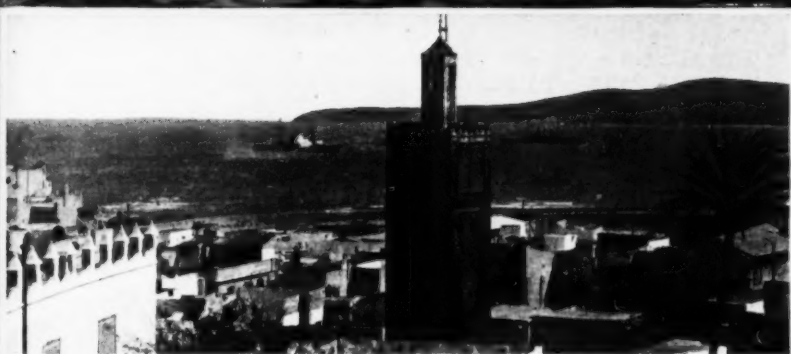


*On the famous, shaded Bund at Canton
Many such Chinese maids have become the wives of Men Who Can't Come Back*

The little drama was played in a typical Moorish garden, which is usually a rank, uncared-for orangery enclosed by high walls, the grass growing green and long and the branches of the trees borne to the ground by the weight of their small but luscious fruit.

My host, the "German convert," received me squatting on his mat, as became a wealthy Mohammedan; several other young Arabs were present. A full course Moorish dinner—a rather dreadful affair—was successfully gone through, when three dancing-girls (an unusual compliment to an infidel guest) joined the group, followed a little later by several professional musicians. Fiddles and guitars were tightened up and the celebration commenced. For some time the interest was perfunctory, but after an hour the enthusiasm of guests, musicians, and dancers became worked up to a pitch of utter abandon. My host, who had remained seated throughout in a quiet, dignified way, merely inclining his head and gently clapping his hands to the rhythm of the music, excused himself for a few minutes and retired. A little later, a slave touching me on the arm and motioning me to follow him, led me to a large orange-tree, whose bent limbs formed a secluded arbor. Pushing through the branches, I was invited to enter by a cheery English cry from my host, who, seated on a small candle-box, held out his hand with the welcome, "Come right in. It is my little surprise."

It was an odd picture: the ground covered with an expensive carpet; the exquisitely dressed renegade seated before a roughly improvised table on which were laid a salver of fruit, a vase of red geraniums, a quart bottle of Spanish champagne, and a can of beef bearing a Chicago label. Taking my hand in his two, he held it a moment clinched without speaking, his blue eyes blazing with



The beautiful Bay of Tangier from the mosque; French warships riding at anchor in the roadstead

a passion both intense and pathetic, as, gazing straight into mine, he finally asked: "Can you go back?"

Away at the other end of the garden, we saw through the branches the figures of the dancing girls in sinuous sway, and as the music quickened, they seemed to flit among the orange-trees like fairies. The weird music of the East rose and fell, wailing minor cadences, while the Arab men, singing accompaniments, applauded and encouraged the dancers to madder efforts. The red light of the sun, already riding low in the Western sky, filtered through the fence-boardings and played strange shadow-freaks on the faces of the musicians.

The man in front waved a hand toward the group.

"And this is what I get for what I gave up. You think I am a German. They all do out here and I let them. Even the German consul has never raised the question. My parents *were* Germans, but I was born, and for a long time lived in Cincinnati. You know the place? They do things pretty slow there, and it is more German than American—that's what they used to say. Cincinnati! I'd give everything I hope to have if I could look into that city to-night for just one hour, with the snow falling and every house lit up, and the Christmas-trees loaded with remembrances of people who know how to love."

As he reached the word "Christmas" his voice fell.

"I have been here fourteen years. In that time I have scarcely spoken a word of English. Oh, yes, there were plenty of opportunities but I didn't want them. Perhaps, though, I did—anyway I didn't take them. I had accepted these people for my own, and after I had got through their ceremonies and became a Moham-medan they took me over. In all these fourteen years I don't think



I've allowed a thought of Christmas to come into my head. Or if it came, I didn't let it stay. Yet to-day when I passed you out at Shilah, and saw the bar breaking into mountains and hopelessly unnavigable, then turned round to the desert and saw the Beni Hassans sitting in their tents and waiting for fight, I knew what was in store for you—to-day. How did I know it was Christmas-day? Three years ago a belated Christian calendar came into my hands; since then I have ticked off every day on the Mussulman calendar with the corresponding Christian date.

"Why did I leave?" He slowly shook his head. "I will tell you only that if there had been no stock-tickers in Cincinnati I should be beside a Christmas-tree there to-night. Do I want to go back? Man, when I sit out here and all the hilarity over yonder is going on, I dream—dream—dream! Everything takes me back. The mountains up there become the Walnut Hills. The donkeys, mules, and camels transform themselves into hansoms, and street-cars, while the desert fills up with parks and boulevards. Mirages! Many a time the desert has shown me Fountain Square and the white living stream that runs about it."

Meantime, the young negro slave had opened and sliced the beef, and laying it on coarse chunks of bread, we washed it down with the wine. We had not been apart from the group more than twenty minutes when the man from Cincinnati jumped up suddenly, saying, "Now we must get back or these people will want to know what I can find to interest me in a 'Christian dog.'"

There was a silent toast, a hand shake—Christian fashion—and our Christmas-dinner was over.

As I prepared to depart, an hour later, he leaned toward me whispering, "You haven't told me. Can *you* go back?"

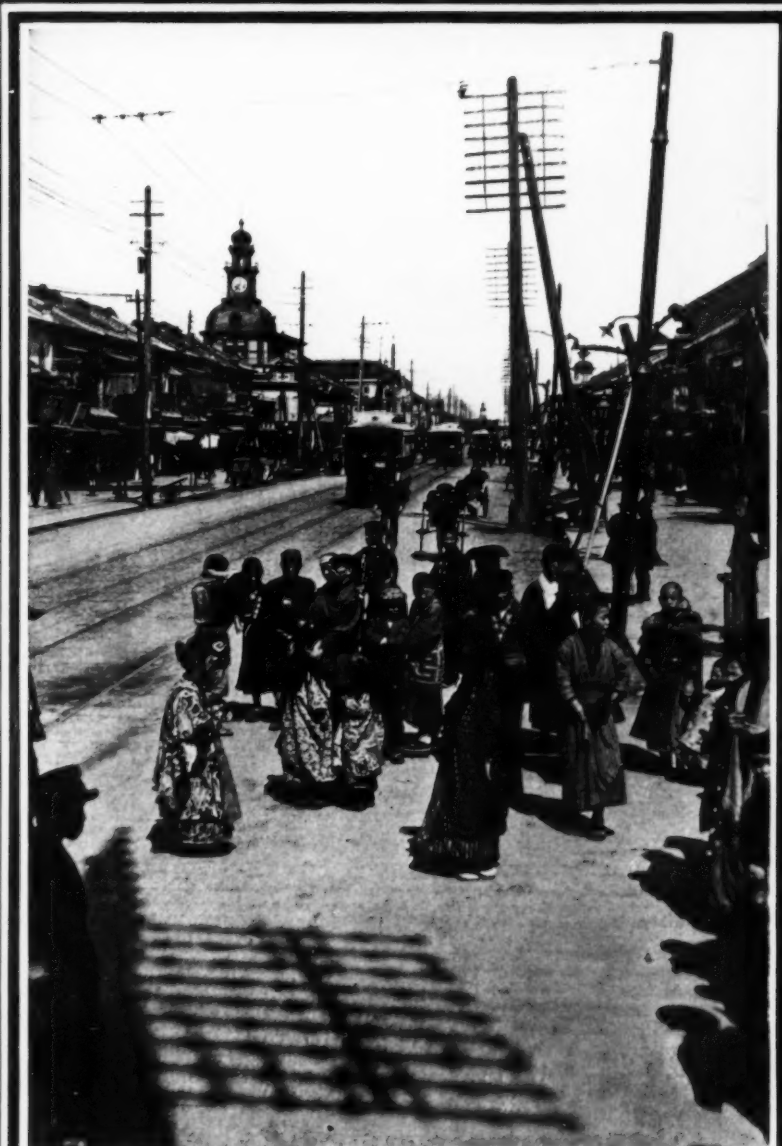
I replied, "I can."

"I am glad," was all he said, but in his eyes was the look that I had so often seen in the eyes of others such as he.

The slave led his mule out over the garden tangles, and the Christmas-sun set blood-red.

France is the only European nation holding out hope and security to the Men Who Can't Come Back; but her asylum is far removed from her own frontiers.

The Foreign Legion has been sung and written of so much in the last century, that the American view has vested it in a traditional romanticism, warranted, alas, only by a false perspective. Criminals of all shades, disappointed men of every country, political refugees, military fugitives, go to make up this wonderful mongrel fighting-machine. "No Questions Asked" might well be



Even Tokio numbers among its foreign inhabitants many Men Who Can't Come Back



Dancing and Singing Girls of Tahiti

Lulled by their voices the Men Who Can't Come Back dream always of Home

the regimental motto. Each man signing his bond of service, sells his soul for five years, for the wage of one sou per day.

A few years back, when the fighting commenced with the Chouia Tribe on the west coast of Africa, three battalions of the Foreign Legion from Algiers were brought round to engage the Arabs. Of these battalions eighty per cent were Germans. The Legion headquarters were at Casa Blanca, distant three days' walking journey from Rabat, the present seat of the Moorish Government. In these troublous times, the only ships plying between the two ports are French crusiers, and owing to the hostility of the outside tribes, the overland caravan journey had become exceedingly hazardous. Yet within the first three weeks of that year, no less than forty-seven men deserted from the Foreign Legion at Casa Blanca and tramped to Rabat!

Seated with the Sultan's soldiers at the gate, I watched the fugitives arriving in picturesque groups of two and three for several consecutive days. They immediately placed themselves under the protection of the German Consul, preferring deportation and certain punishment for the acts which years before had driven them out of the Fatherland, to further service in the *Legion Etrangere*! In each case they reached the gates at Rabat, denuded of every stitch of clothing and covered with wounds inflicted by Arab children who, with needle-pointed daggers, had literally prodded them from village to village. The guards at the gate had been prepared with supplies of gunny-sacking, and before entering the town, each fugitive was given a small loin-cloth.

One man in particular I noted for his essentially Anglo-Saxon appearance. In the early morning he approached the gate alone, and but for his multitude of raw wounds, would have cut a per-



*Cheerful natives of the Society Islands
Many Men Who Can't Come Back have found security in the South Seas*

fectly ludicrous figure. Save for the crush-cap of the Foreign Legion wearily stuck on the back of his head, he was perfectly nude. Entering the city, he inquired of a guard in bad French, the direction of the German consulate. As he passed through the gate, his eyes roamed everywhere in obvious apprehension until they encountered mine. Walking over to me, in a voice choking with weariness and shame, he inquired, "English or American?" and on my answering "A little of each," he appealed dramatically, "For God's sake, pull me out of this!" Then I knew I had met another Man Who Can't Come Back.

On the night following I was called to the British Consulate to meet the deserter who had appealed to me the day previous. He had formally claimed British protection, but privately, had confided to the Consul that he was an American citizen, born in Cleveland, Ohio.

A Nevada cowboy, of some college education, he had come to the point where he could never accurately determine the ownership of the horses roundabout, and his neighbors so plainly resented his mental confusion in this respect and his frequent absences from home, that one night, as he himself explained it, he just "pulled out." After devious wanderings he brought up in Algiers and became one of the Foreign Legion.

We asked him for the reasons prompting the recent wholesale desertions.

"In Algeria there is nothing but French authority, and once you get inside and the papers are signed, that's your end. There is no getting out, and after a month, it's anything to get away. Believe me, in this little jaunt we have just come through, there was no junketing. We only got away from the beneficences of the



*An Arabian Market in the Desert
Would Uncle Sam think of looking here for one of his prodigals?*

Legion officers, when the Arabs started in to take care of us. First, they tore off our uniforms. Why they left me my cap, I don't know, unless they sensed the fact that I was an American citizen."

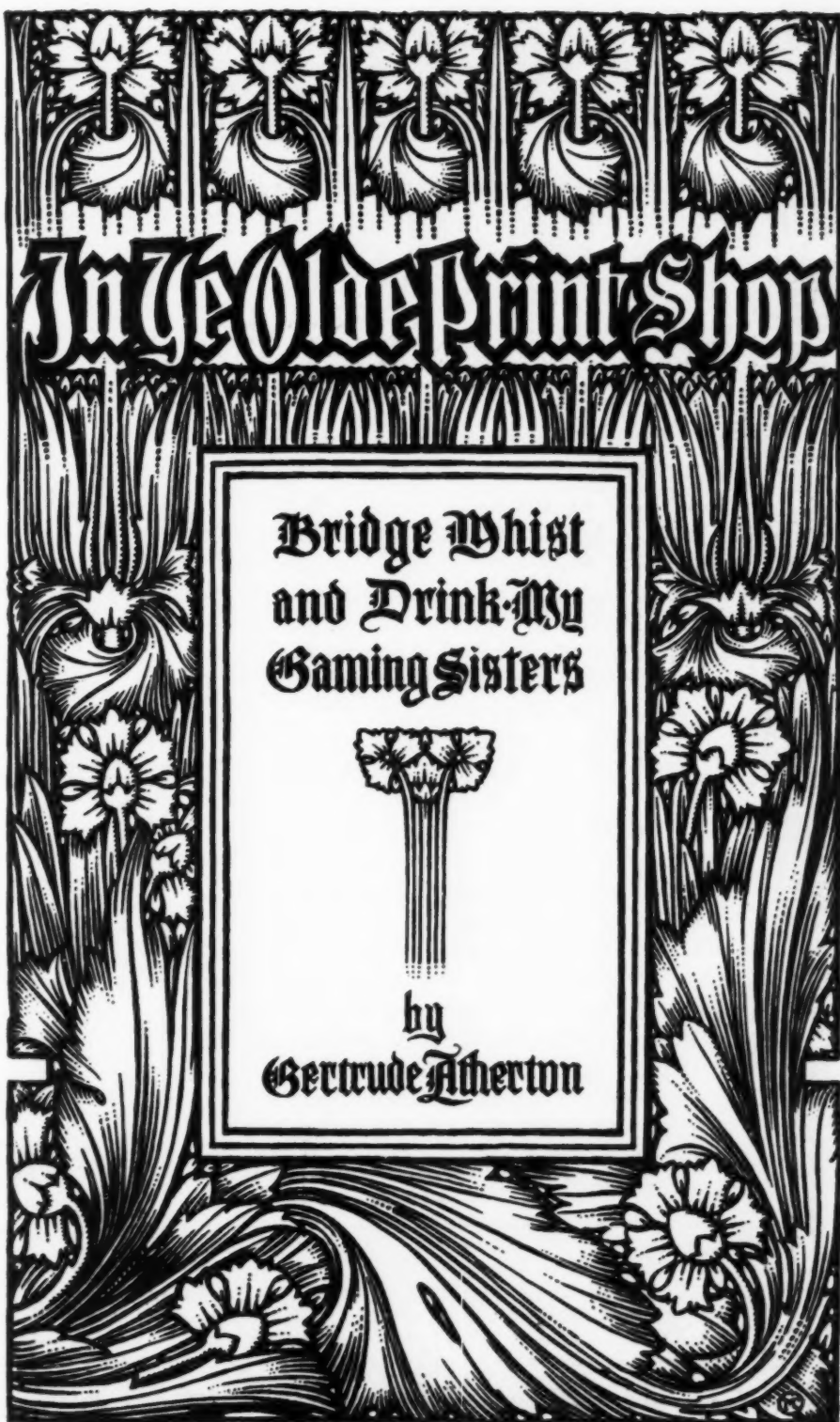
I had been watching him in close interest and as he uttered the words "American citizen" unconsciously he drew himself up to his full, well-drilled height and continued in rehabilitated pride.

There was a pause, as his mind carried back to Algeria and Casa Blanca, and he concluded decisively and deliberately:

"Now, gentlemen, it is up to you. One of you comes from a country to which I can't go back. I am up against it. The only occupation open to me is professional soldiering, and the United States Army won't take me. I tried them once in the Philippines. If I have to take orders, I want them in English. If you keep those French devils off and help me to reach Egypt and get in the British Army there, I will make good. If they want a reference, tell them to give me a .45 Colt and throw a franc in the air at twenty paces. If I go to America, the only doors open to me are the penitentiary's but I will willingly foot it from Casa Blanca to Rabat over again, then cross to God's country and do a seven-year's term before I will go back to the Legion. Why, you ask? Sir, there are things done in the Foreign Legion, as mere incidents, that make the lowest quarters of the biggest cities back home show up like towns of churches with streets paved in virgin gold."

To-day, with a British camel corps away off in Western Soudan, that horse-thief of Nevada dreams and drills, and drills and dreams—drills because the commands are in English—and dreams because all men who can't come back *must* dream or die.

And the dream he dreams is of a White House envelope—on the outside his own, "real" name—within, a president's pardon.





THE MOST REMARK-
ABLE POINT
ABOUT THIS CON-
TROVERSY OF
DRINKING WOM-
EN THAT HAS
BEEN RAGING
FOR THE PAST SIX

months and more is the assumption that the vice is a new development. Whatever may be the present reason for their excesses, the fact remains that there have been women drunkards since the beginning of time. To say nothing of history, it has been a favorite theme of poets and painters, and one has only to study the works of Reubens to know his opinion of the sex in this regard.

Drinking in public restaurants in the United States is a new development, for it has always been an absurd convention with us that wine should not be served on the home table: a part of the national hypocrisy, which demands that the world shall see us not as we are, but as we should like to be. It is only of late years that even the wealthy and, from their advantages, more enlightened class, have ignored this convention and lived like civilized beings, but the majority of the men even yet go to bars for their drinks; and go far oftener than if they had grown up on the light wines seen on every European table.

Gertrude Atherton

The absinthe drinkers of Paris are a small group; France as a nation is temperate, drinking wine at every meal and having no taste for spirits. The same may be said of Germany, where young and old are nourished on beer and never seem the worse for it.

The United States has always been a heavy patron of spirits, and if the consumption appears to be on the increase it is merely keeping pace with the increase in population. As we now have several millions of Germans, it is quite in order that we have a flourishing beer industry, and I fancy that if statistics were taken it would be found that the country contained no soberer element, nor one that spent less on spirits.

Among the first of my memories is listening to the everlasting gossip of my elders in San Francisco concerning the various well-known society women who drank. They do not appear to have made any bones about it either. They were "picked up in the corridors of hotels by servants and flung into their rooms," on "the floors of opera boxes," on "the Oakland boat," to say nothing of the street. Many more were suspected, and it was almost fatal to deny one's self to one's friends for a week!

These women were by no means mushrooms of the native soil; they came from the East and South, and in nine cases out of ten were of distinguished families.

The Red Book Magazine

Whether it was in the air, in their blood, or whether the deadly monotony of the lives of the better class in that far-off town drove them to the most accommodating vice, I do not pretend to say. But one seldom hears such stories now in San Francisco. Even the young men no longer get drunk at parties, and although we have thousands of disreputable women who patronize the "ladies' entrances" of saloons, and make night horrible in the neighborhood of the Tenderloin, the women of the upper classes appear to have no weakness for alcohol whatever. Perhaps it is because, like other modern women, they have found so much more in life than their forerunners had, yet with none of the nerve-racking rush of more complicated centers; perhaps it is because they travel more, or that their intelligence is greater; or perhaps they dislike red noses. They drink their cocktails or wine—more generally a mild "cup" at luncheon—like civilized beings, and think no more about it.

Clergymen and the like, who judge people's habits by what they see in public, seldom approach the truth. Even New York, now receiving the fulminations of these well-meaning gentlemen, is no exception. More than once I have been the only one to take tea at an afternoon party of women at the Waldorf or Sherry's, while my companions drank cocktails or highballs. No doubt the party incurred

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the disapproval of many a worthy from the interior, and yet I know absolutely that not one of those women was anything but a superficial drinker. Living at a high state of tension—merely the incessant chattering of New York women must use up an immense amount of nerve force—the needed brace was speedily dissipated and did them no harm. Indeed, I doubt if it did them as much as the tea did me, although probably I have been approved by many a virtuous outsider.

The New York woman is set on springs: she is wound up and warranted never to run down; the very word "repose" is meaningless to her; it is not her sort that stimulants harm. Nor is it likely that in the depths of her effervescing brain she cares more for spirits than for tea. But she wishes the world to know that, like the aristocrat of Britain, she is above all laws. It is counter to the unwritten code of "America" to drink in public, therefore, she will snap her fingers in the face of the herd that dares take no such liberty. In a country where, with the best efforts, the lines of caste are still vague, even among the rich and well-born, it emphasizes the superiority of those that are or would be fashionable, although they may trot home and be the best of burgeoisily little mothers. One of the most reckless-appearing women I have ever known, is one of the most devoted and self-sacrificing of parents.

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While Western women have acquired more ballast, Eastern women of the favored class certainly have become more foolish in many respects, and the explanation, of course, lies in the higher pressure, which gives them no time to think, no time to realize any sort of ideal; and while they are as bright as ever, they have forgotten the very meaning of the word "intellect." Money has become so plentiful, and life in great centers so complex, interests so diversified, and at the same time so shallow, that it has bred an astonishingly superficial—albeit charming—race of women at the top. The enormous class that has taken to club life, or professional life, a class that has money and more time to be really clever, is practically free from destructive weaknesses. But has there not always been a frivolous, dissipated minority, and will not the same conditions always produce the same results, human nature being what it is? Unless clergymen can bring about a revolution and a condition in which every member of a community will be forced to work for his and her bread they can accomplish nothing. When women in command of a great amount of superfluous capital spend a large part of their lives in dressing themselves, and going from dinners to parties, it is quite natural that in time they should seek stronger and stronger diversions. They become blasée and dissipated, and if they do not

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drink to the excess the reformers fear, they become what is quite as bad, superficial and de-individualized. I do not take them very seriously. Generally they are bores, for they cannot think along any given line for five consecutive minutes. They are the class that every generation breeds as it breeds repetitions of all sorts, and may be brushed aside as not worth considering.

But when it comes to the statistics of the doctors, that is quite another matter. There are revelations!—and they know what they are talking about. In New York alone there are countless sanitariums for the nervous disorders of women, an ugly percentage of which are caused by drink. If all of these were patronized by women broken by the battle or the nervous strain of life, it would not greatly be a matter for remark, but an appalling number are the refuge of girls who have drunk themselves into a nervous state bordering upon insanity. Most of these girls, of course, belong to the wealthier class, or they would not be able to patronize these sanitariums, and the reason for their early downfall is not far to seek.

At no age is original sin, or, to be more precise, human weakness so quick to manifest itself as in the young of both sexes. All their tendencies, at that age largely hereditary—and derived not only from their immediate progenitors but from the race—are in solution. The char-

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acter has not crystalized; their will, beyond stubbornness—a weakness in itself—is as fluid as their pre-Adamic desires to be naughty and disobedient, gluttonous and dishonest. They have a vague mental glimmer of better things, but unless carefully brought up or religiously inclined, they are in no haste to achieve a condition which seems to them to be disassociated from youth. In large and complex households, with the ever multiplying responsibilities and diversions of a great income, it is not possible to watch girls very closely, and as mothers are prone to think their own offspring perfection in any case, they rarely understand just how great a fool a young girl can be. She is left largely to the association of other girls of her own age and condition, and it is rare indeed that one or more of any particular set is not by natural endowment as bad as she is silly. These girls, enchanted to feel themselves as emancipated as their parents, lock their doors, drink and smoke together, and having neither the experience nor the inherited force to practice self-restraint, soon contract the habit of imbibing when they are tired or unhappy, or fancy themselves sick of life—melancholy is one of the diseases of youth and needs as careful treatment as measles or whooping-cough—and it is small wonder that the rich girl congratulates herself upon having found a way to make her burdens endur-

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able, undreamed of by her humbler sister.

Of course, as the habit grows the nerves require constant stimulation, and when these girls have had a year or two of society, with its killing demands upon nerves and strength, the habit is confirmed and they drink themselves into the sanitarium. If, in addition to the commonplace trials of their daily lives, they have an unfortunate love-affair, they have no power to resist what must ever be to the girl the most agonizing of earthly experiences; and they take recklessly to the only panacea they know anything of.

It can not be said in these days and of this class that the social ban upon table-wines is the cause of secret drinking among women, for that prejudice now exists only in the vast middle-class. Indeed, during two Winters in Washington, when I made several calls every day, I frequently saw a punch bowl in one of the rooms and I always saw girls refreshing themselves. If one asked for tea, one was regarded with as much astonishment as if asking for water in an European restaurant. No doubt many of these girls went home in a maudlin or hysterical condition, for they paid many calls each day in that benighted city, every hostess having her "at home" day, upon which one is expected to call in exchange for other civilities.

When Society is in full swing in Washington, the people—beyond a small ex-

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clusive and extremely dull set—become like mechanical toys, doing everything that can be expected of anybody, accepting practically every invitation, pushing themselves until they drop exhausted into the semi-peace of Lent. Nobody in Washington seems to know why he does anything after he is fairly started; why he consents to a combination of the maximum of work with the minimum of pleasure; and to walk in through one drawing-room door and out the other, saluting the hostess by the way, is no uncommon performance. Perhaps that is the reason why the sympathetic hostess offers punch instead of tea, but it is a pernicious custom and no doubt responsible for much harm. Many young folks would not see it at home, nor think of it, all things being equal; but tastes are quickly formed, particularly a taste that responds to the natural instinct to do something one should not.

But the girls are by no means the only offenders, the only inmates of sanitariums. That women of all ages drink, any doctor, particularly any nerve-specialist, could give evidence. Most women, at one time or another, have a nervous breakdown, no matter how well-ordered their lives, and those who have indulged their nervous systems with stimulants have not the will power, when this condition takes stealthy possession of them, to make even a show of resistance. They

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drink first to stimulate the exhausted centers, then to find oblivion.

A ship's doctor told me once that rich American women were the worst sailors in the world because their self-indulgent lives had left them with no power of resistance to anything. On the other hand, there is no question that many women of the same class in England drink as recklessly in secret as Americans. A London doctor told me of one woman he knew who wore a thin curved flask in her stocking, which she managed to have filled daily at one restaurant or another, not caring to trust too much to the discretion of her servants. These women lie in bed half the day drinking. No doubt, when the habit is contracted by mature women in a fair state of health, it is to drown trouble or that disgust of life which comes of too much indulgence and leisure. They have neither the will nor the desire to check the habit. I stayed once in a private hotel in London much frequented by women who had sold or let their town houses, and was told that it was no infrequent thing to find these ladies in the morning on the floor of their sitting-rooms after a late supper without.

I have known many men of brilliant parts with a weakness for alcohol, but I have never known a woman drinker who was not more or less a fool. Women of strong brains do not take to drink to drown their woes or to stimulate their

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brain cells; they can even break themselves of tea drinking, or of that mildest of all dissipations, cigaret smoking, if they find their nerves are threatened. Therefore, although girls should be watched and piloted over this as over the many other shoals of youth, I think that when a woman of mature years takes to drink she is not worth bothering about. The mere fact that the vice is but the outer expression of inherent weakness, long disguised by fortuitous circumstances, argues that the world is well rid of her like. No doubt it is one of Nature's plans to determine the survival of the fittest, for some women have enough provocation in their daily lives to drown their woes. But the ninety-nine find strength, and if the hundredth cannot, she were best out of the way.

The women who have the most reasonable excuse for wrong-doing and are most sensitive to temptations, are those of small means, who yet have a servant to do the work of their flat, the women who have no social distractions, few duties and certainly no need of active labor. These women are alone all day with little to do but to read trashy novels and newspaper accounts of the envied performances of those in Society. To them there returns nightly a tired and oftentimes commonplace husband. That the most shocking tragedies take place in these little lives we may well imagine, and they must from the

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very nature of their conditions, multiply with a terrible rapidity. There is no remedy by an individual occupation, or the Woman's Club. One would think, to read the newspapers, that the United States was one vast hive of women's clubs, but there is room for many more, and no such solution of woman's problem has as yet developed.

There has also been a great deal of talk of bridge leading to drinking, but I do not believe that this is true. Gambling of any sort demands a clear brain, and bridge particularly, an amount of concentration that more than a very small allowance of alcohol would dissipate. If anything, I should say that the women who play bridge drink less than their weaker sisters, not only for the reason given, but because cards furnish them with sufficient interest and occupation.

Only a few years ago there was a group of women in New York society notorious, not merely for drinking in public, but for making public exhibitions of themselves. One "leader" was ordered out of a great restaurant in Paris, at the insistence of a Russian prince, who threatened to withdraw his patronage from the hotel if the noisy barbarian were not put out. Another has reeled out of Sherry's more than once and stood screaming in the middle of the street until her footman was able to force her into the carriage. Their exhibitions at Newport were equal-

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ly notorious, but since they have all taken to bridge one hears few of these stories.

I have seen people playing bridge all day Sunday in English country houses, but I have never seen any drinking; and, to make a great leap, I spent three months two years ago in a country town forty miles north of San Francisco, where I had much the same experience. As far as I could make out every woman in the town was playing cards—bridge and five hundred—morning, noon, and night. They met three times a day; they thought of little else; they gambled madly for a twenty-five cent spoon, and hated the winner; but they did not drink. When I now and again came across one of these apparently infatuated dames, she acted like any normal, kindly being, and was even well dressed. Of course, not being out of pocket they had no other pangs, and their only cause for uneasiness or remorse was an unmade bed or a tardy dinner for their patient husbands.

Some years ago that particular town was one of the wildest in California: its name was a by-word; and while I do not assume for a moment that it has been reformed by bridge, still I can well imagine that it would be a strong character indeed who could live in it without either an occupation or a vice.

Even the men have succumbed to the fascination of bridge, and one hears no longer of immense sums won and lost at

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poker, and the inevitable sequel, shooting scrapes.

It is not so many years ago that, being obliged to spend the night at a roadside hotel in one of the dreary wastes of Southern California, I went out to walk on the veranda after the evening meal, and, my attention being attracted by a light in the rough "office," I looked through the window. Besides the fire there were only two or three lamps attached to the grimy walls. Seated about a table were four men in rough coats, hip-boots, sombreros, ragged beards and hair, playing monté. At the left of each was a small hill of gold pieces, at the right a cocked pistol—a big horse-pistol. I stood for half an hour hoping that something even more picturesque than their appearance would develop, but they moved nothing but their hands and eyes; I doubt if they spoke. Whether this class has been reformed by bridge or not, I cannot say. It would be almost a pity!

Where a few women gamble for high stakes, thousands play for love of the game, for the sake of having something to do and to look forward to. That bridge harms the latter class, I do not for a moment believe, but that it hardens those who win and lose large sums of money, is consistent with all human nature.

Nothing brutalizes the mind like the pursuit of money for its own sake, and one can well believe the story told by

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Mrs. Russell Sage some years ago, of a man, who, visiting at a country house on the Hudson for the first time, was drawn into a game of bridge against his will. Knowing little of the game, he lost three hundred dollars, and was much relieved when a footman announced that the trap was at the door to take him to the station. His hostess left the card table also and followed him into the hall. But not to bid him a polite farewell. She demanded the sum he had lost. Naturally he protested that he had no such sum with him, but that he would send a check immediately upon his arrival in New York.

"You cannot leave this house until the sum is paid," replied the woman, "and you should not have come to my house unless you were prepared to play, and with the money to pay your debts."

Nor could he get away until he had borrowed the money from a fellow sufferer; but it is safe to say that he paid no more visits to fashionable gambling dens.

To attempt to reform a class of people so lost to the common decencies of life as this woman, would be as futile as to make a hotel or country-house servant conscious of the ignominy of accepting tips. But they can always be avoided, and in time, being reduced wholly to the society of each other, they will all die of satiety, and the world be happy until it breeds a new vice, which will seduce the unwary.



The goats went tinkling forth on the lower slopes

What the Buyer Bought

BY ANNE WARNER

Author of "Susan Clegg," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY W. H. D. KOERNER

IT lay deep in the innermost heart of the Alps—that little town of wood-carvers—and there was surely enough whiteness around it for eight months of every year to purify any evil breath that might come accidentally to blow therein. The Alpine snow—a true Christmas snow, for the peace of an everlasting Christmas seems to brood over the mountain's winter—drifted softly in among the October winds and stayed and stayed, seeming truly Christmas-like, half brightness and half symbolic, until, in May, gradually and gently it withdrew itself to allow that other blessedly symbolic emblem—the green of leaf and stem—to take its place.

Then the sheep and goats went tinkling forth on the lower slopes and fed in

plenty; then the geese were herded, too; then the half-yearly wash was well and thoroughly accomplished by those to whom a weekly laundry appears as amusingly impractical as an hourly laundry would to us; then the thatches were repaired and the gardens were planted and the yodel came ringing back from the heights.

And all sorts of annual things began to take place: the bishop passed through, and the men with goods to sell, and the wagons loaded with articles for farther on up where the mountain-climbers passed, and the hair-man who bought hair, and the man who took orders for all sorts of necessities that don't grow naturally above the oak-level, and then along in August Bermann himself came,

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and his was the greatest coming of them all, for Bermann himself was the go-between, the one who turned the Winter's work into another year's living, at once the Fate and the Providence of all the village.

To sum up in a word, Bermann was the buyer for the outer world—the world beyond the Alpine calm, the world beyond the Alpine measure, the world in all its worldliness—that world which through long being has branded itself on brow and breast with its own name.

Bermann was of the world and they of the village were of the mountains: he was very much of the world and they were very much of the mountains, some more than others, of course, Hendrik the most of all. The world of Bermann knew Hendrik, however. The world knew Hendrik through the curious little mark which he always cut in the standard of every sheep that he carved. Sheep with that little twisted "H" upon them brought a big price, for Hendrik was a wonderful carver of sheep; otherwise the world knew nothing of him and never would know anything of him, for the world would have no use for Hendrik as a man, and would probably have lodged him in an insane asylum before a twelve-month had passed.

Perhaps he really was weak-minded, I don't know. He had been reared in the mountains alone with his mother until at eighteen he had gone away for a year with a party of travelers who wanted two stout fellows and chose Hendrik as one of them. At the end of the year he was back, and from that time, two years since, he lived alone with his mother now become ill.

The son herded goats and sheep and helped with the work about the small mountain-hut, but his chief occupation was carving, and although he accomplished but a few groups or single pieces yearly he was already widely known as a

true artist in wood. He was a tall young fellow, very handsome, with beautiful brown eyes, a sweet boyish mouth, and broad square shoulders. Of course he knew nothing of his celebrity in the world or of the value of his work. Bermann took care of that. Were not the Alps a big sure barrier between the carver and the world, and is it not just as well that some such barrier shall be? The carver who is in the world and of the world can meditate the answer to that at his leisure.

So now it was August and Bermann had come. Everyone brought out his work and the buyer took

it all and paid for it all. He bought everything—the stiff looking as well as the perfect, the deftly carved, the bungled, the true bits of art in with the false—all—all. Every wooden creature that had been cut since his last visit a year before he purchased and paid for in cash. Little Egge's absurd hens were just as quickly disposed of as Walther's good sheep—only, of course, Walther received more money, as was just. Walther's sheep were really remarkable this year—almost as good as cousin Johann's. Both of them had learned of Hendrik and Hendrik was recognized in the village as a genius.

"But I don't see Hendrik," said Bermann all of a sudden, looking into their faces; "why, where is he?"

"His mother's sick," said Louise, who looked very funny indeed because all her hair had been sold the month before; "he can't leave her. And he hasn't done anything this year anyway."

"Hasn't done anything this year!" repeated Bermann, with a quick frown—he had a way of frowning that was dreadful. "Why—why, how's that?"

"She's been sick all year," said Louise; "he's sat with her, and read verses to her out of the Bible, and cooked and done everything. She's done nothing this year."

"Hasn't he done me one sheep—not



one ewe with lambs?" said Bermann, almost angrily. "I can't believe it."

"He's had no time," said Louise. "Hendrik's done no other work than to nurse his mother this year."

No more was said just then, but directly the sale was over and while the toys were being packed, the buyer set out for the little *jägerhütte* where Hendrik and his old mother lived. It was quite a walk up the stream and around the foot of the Kleinstein, and Bermann was warm and weary long before he reached there. When he did arrive and saw Hendrik standing before the door flinging grain for the chickens' evening-meal, he felt angry. It is in the blood of the world to chafe and foam when it finds itself face to face with one who has done no carving that year and stands serene amidst the calm of the dawning night, feeding with a generous hand the dependent creatures upon whom he in turn is also dependent.

Bermann was more than vexed.

"Ah, Hendrik!" he called from the distance.

The young man turned with a smile that was so sunny and ingenious it always won all hearts.

"Ah, master," he called in his turn, "you've come to ask after my work, I'll wager."

"Yes, surely." Bermann was now approached. "You've made a poor showing this year."

"Truly. One has but one mother, you know," said Hendrik.

He fluttered the last of the corn abroad as he spoke, and smiled again. He was exasperatingly cheerful and careless.

"Can't you find time to work at all? Haven't you had any spare moments?"

"Oh, it isn't my hands, master. it's my head."

"Your head! How do you mean? You don't carve with your head, do you?" asked Bermann quite impatiently.

Hendrik laughed and nodded.

"Yes, master, just that. I carve with my head: that's why I do so well. Hands

don't matter a bit; it's the head that counts. It's my head from start to finish. The fingers are but my machine."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, master, can't you see? Look you, there's the tree first, I see the sheep in the branch, I see the twigs that have made the knots that are going to give meaning to the fleece—"

"Give meaning to the fleece! You're talking moonshine!"

"I'm too simple to explain myself any better, master, but it's so; that's all I can say. I choose my bit of tree, and then after I've cut the branch and laid it up to dry, comes the sheep into my head—a ewe or ram as the case may be, you understand—and it lives here and bleats there and lives in my head and stays by me until the work with my hands is just a mere nothing—just play—so plain in fact, that I hardly give a thought to the knife as I cut."

"I can't make rhyme or reason of what you mean, Hendrik, but your work is good, so never mind. And so you've had no time this year, you say?"

"Oh, this year, my head's had no time surely, master. It's been busy with the mother. No sheep came—none will come while she lies there ill. If there was anyone else whom she loved maybe I could think, but I'm not sure. God only gives one mother."

"You ought to have a wife, Hendrik."

The young man smiled sadly. "That will never be, master," he answered, and he said it so quietly and simply, but in so final a manner that the buyer passed on to another view of the case, saying:

"Or someone to tend to your mother."

"I am the one she wants."

"But how can you make a living this way?"

Hendrik smiled.

"Pfalz will trust me,"

he said, easily. "The dear mother will not be here long; I shall have a lifetime to pay debts after I am left in the hut alone."

"That's a poor way to do." Bermann's



tone was cold and disapproving. "I'll tell you a wiser and more sensible course. Let someone else carve the sheep and then you give a touch here and a touch there, and cut that little square 'H' of yours inside the leg. After that, well and good; I'll take it at the same price as your own work."

Hendrik contemplated him drolly. "But they won't be my sheep," he said, "so why should I be paid for them; and what reason would there be in my putting my mark on them?"

Bermann pulled a little wooden group of a ewe and her lamb out of his pocket.

"Look here," he said, "what do you think of that?"

Hendrik took the carving into his own hands.

"That's Johann's," he said with a nod; "he's a smart boy. He'll learn to carve someday—if he keeps his eyes open and watches real sheep."

"Why, what's wrong with this piece?" asked Bermann. "You speak as if it wasn't well done."

"Well done!" said Hendrik. "Why, master, have you never seen sheep? Look at this leg—and then a lamb never lies down in that way. But still, Johann's a smart boy."

"Now, I'll tell you something," said the buyer. "Look at that bit. I'll get six pieces of silver for that in the city; well, if it had your mark on it I'd get sixteen!"

"Why?" asked Hendrik. "My mark won't change the carving any."

"Can't you see how it will make the city-folk pay more, though?"

Hendrik, holding the bit of carving in his hand, shook his head, not understanding.

"No one will notice the leg or the lamb if your mark is on it," Bermann said then.



"But now, why not? They'll be just so bad anyway."

"But people will think that they must be right if your mark is on them."

At that Hendrik began to laugh. "Oh, I see. It's a joke. I have carved good sheep until now if I carve eight legs to one ram people will still think that I must know."

His laughter rang merrily but after a minute he grew sober. "Poor town-people,"

he said, "poor, stupid town-people!"

"I'll have Johann and Walther bring you all their sheep to-morrow," said Bermann, smiling, "and you'll take them in hand at once."

Hendrik raised his eyes very quickly.

"What for?" he asked.

"Why, for you to cut the name in the legs."

The wood-carver stared. "You don't mean that?" he asked. "You don't really expect that?"

"Of course I mean it."

"You mean that I shall pretend to have made such sheep as this that those boys cut out?"

"Oh, you can touch them up a bit with your knife, I said."

"I wouldn't touch my knife to them," said Hendrik, handing the carving back contemptuously. "If you are not joking I am sorry for you, for it shows that you are not of the Alps—or even of Switzerland." His tone was of a sort unpleasant to hear.

"You're a fool," said Bermann, good-naturedly. "Why, man, those boys can carve the year around and you can get three silver pieces for every sheep they get out—just by five minutes work on each."

"I don't want such work," said Hendrik, proudly.

"Think of your mother," Bermann said.



He lived alone with his mother, now become ill

"Go and look at my mother as she lies within. She wants for nothing."

"Think anyhow," said Bermann, turning away. "It's worth thinking over. I can sell sheep with your mark anywhere; I'm willing to pay for the mark only. Think it over. Every comfort. No debts. No harm done. Think it over."

He went away and Hendrik laughed cheerfully and carelessly over the comical ideas of folks from afar. To him the proposal was so absurd as to be wholly unworthy consideration.

He went to bed a little later and the chill night air of later August made his sleep a heavy one. In the night, when the cold and peace of the Alpine Winter seemed to stretch out its hand over the Summer-time and bid her back, back—some other hand stretched forth to touch the sick mother in her box-like wooden bed, and morning bringing light, brought the knowledge that she was strangely, fatally worse. That superfluity of comfort to which her son as well as all the world apply the elastic term "wanting for nothing," grew suddenly inadequate and when the doctor from the village and then one from the town four miles down the valley had been successively at her bed-side Hendrik began to find a new ratio of demand which illness can make on health. Very cheerfully he ran into debt to Pfalz and very hard he worked that all should be as it should be for the few weeks that ended everything.

Then came Death and the two or three days of celebrity which clings about that state in small, far-away places. Hendrik, walking behind his mother's funeral car, had an hour when what he did counted almost as much as what the grand-duke had done when he had passed through there five years before.

"Just as it turned by the Ritterstrom he tripped on a stone," Ilse told Katrine in a whisper later when old Frau Pfalz declared that he had looked at her and started to nod as he came towards her house. "I hope that he will get at work

quickly now and pay me all he owes me," her husband replied.

Early in October Bermann returned. He had made a long tour and heaven alone knows what crates of horses, cats, dolls, etc., he had bought and shipped into the world-outside.

"Hendrik's sick himself now," Louise, her head covered with flaxen rings that gave her an oddly child-like, doll-like look, told him. "He must have gotten it from his mother. He began to change just as soon as she died. It was as if the disease stayed behind in the hut when she went to be buried."

"Ah," said Bermann, "then he wont do much more work; but I'll go and see him anyhow."

So he took the long walk and climbed the slope and there, sitting listlessly on a bench outside his door, was Hendrik, quite a changed man, and sick enough, to all appearances.

"Well, Hendrik, how's this?"

Hendrik smiled a little and took the question to apply to what he was holding in his hands. It was a piece of wood carved roughly in the semblance of a human figure. Bermann took it from his hands and looked at it.

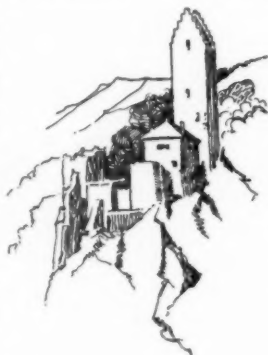
"Not so bad for the first, eh?" asked the carver, wistfully. "Now that I'm all alone greater things come to me than sheep, you see."

Bermann turned the little figurine about in disdain.

"Hendrik, you're a fool, as I've often told you before. What makes you waste time on this sort of thing anyhow when you can do such sheep as you do?"

The carver took back his figure and looked at it with an eye far more critical than the buyer's had been.

"It's not bad, master; it's rather good—very good for a beginning. The arm hangs right and the head is set on so straight and nobly, you can't see her through the wood as I do, but she is there, praying me to bring her forth to be prayed to. It's the Virgin, master, Our



Lady of Sorrows; it's she herself, just as she stood by the mother and looked at me in pity after the mother was dead and I was alone. I had knelt there so long, and there had been no fire, and I had not eaten, so that being cold and fasting, I was fit for prayer just as the priest explained in the sermon last Spring. The mother was still and white—like the outside world that night—and then as I looked the whole room swam in gold and her dead face shone in ecstasy and the Virgin on the shrine grew larger, larger, larger, and all of a sudden I saw that she was distinct just as the sheep had been, and I thought: 'Not sheep again; my fingers—my knife for *Her* hereafter!'—and then I fell on the floor."

"Ah!" said Bermann. "You're even more of a fool than I mistrusted. Here you are, half-sick and owing Pfalz money that he can ill afford to be kept out of. Here you have a way to settle and let his children run about as comfortably clad as the rest. And you throw away livelihood and honesty and set out to try a new game for your own silly taste."

Hendrik looked at him earnestly. "Is it like that way to you?" he asked. "To me nothing appears but *Her*, growing more plain each hour and crying to be freed from the wooden veil. I'd quite forgotten Pfalz."

"It looks that way to me, and to Pfalz too, you may be sure."

"Does it? He didn't tell me that he needed the money badly. In fact, he greets me so kindly that I've hardly ever thought of my debt since it was made."

"He tells others, however."

"Does he?" Hendrik was contemplating the wooden figure.

"Yes."

The carver considered.

"I'll go back to the sheep," he said at last; "I'll leave *Her* till the debt's paid."

"Sheep won't help much now," Bermann answered with a little

scornful laugh. "I can't pay for sheep that aren't made yet, and Pfalz can't wait until next year for his money."

"That's true," said Hendrik, raising his eyes to the others.

"Be a sensible fellow," urged Bermann; "do as I asked you before. Cut your mark into Johann's and Walther's sheep, and I'll give you a franc apiece without your doing one splinter of other work on them. Come, that will make twenty francs for Pfalz at once."

"Oh, no, that I can't do," said Hendrik decidedly. "Why, to put my mark on those poor crooked-legs would be a lie stretched all over Bavaria. No, that I can't do."

"There's the small Emilia," said Bermann; "Pfalz can't have the town-doctor to her because he has no money to pay him. You paid the town-doctor to come to your mother and so you can't pay Pfalz. You've a curious notion of honesty, Hendrik; you keep your neighbor out of what you owe him sooner than do a thing that's so common in business that there'd be no business without it. Does the king make every piece of money that bears his name? Did Herr Krupp sweat over every cannon shaped at Essen? As soon as anything has a value many are hired to make it. You're a fool and a big one, Hendrik, and dishonest, too."

Hendrik became quite pale at that. He opened his lips to speak once or twice but closed them again to listen. When Bermann was silent, he looked all about him, over the green slopes and the towering snow-capped mountains.

"You go and give Pfalz the twenty francs," he said then with a line of pain across his brow and his lips quite dry, "and send me the sheep."

Then he rose, and without saying a word more, went into the house and laid the unfinished carving on the bed that had one time been his mother's



"Now am I quite done," he said to himself numbly; "now is all over. The Virgin can never come to me again after this."

Then he went out to see if Bermann were gone, and he was gone. At that he breathed more easily—a little more easily—and heaved a long, deep sigh.

"God is very strange in His ways," he said sadly, feeling the heavy hand of the world outside and calling it God when it is only one of God's ways of teaching every man the beauty of the Alpine unworldliness.

The sheep—the "crooked legs," as Hendrik called them—came next day. They were all in a basket, and really they were not at all bad sheep. To you or me they would have appeared to be very good sheep, indeed, but to Hendrik their arrival and their appearance were alike agonizing. He stood them out upon the bench before his house and looked at them and groaned aloud.

"I cannot do it," he said to Bermann—who certainly devoted a wonderful amount of his valuable time to this particular mission. "I cannot do it, after all. I can't put my mark upon sheep with ears like this one, for instance—impossible."

"Yah-h-h!" said Bermann, with his bitterest intonation. "That's curious, your idea of right and wrong. You'll sooner cheat the man who helped make your mother's last hours comfortable than strangers who don't know you from me, having never seen either."

Hendrik put up his hands to his head and seemed to hold it together tightly. He made no answer and the twenty wooden sheep all stared straight at him—except such as Johann and Walther had made cross-eyed by chance.

"There's a difference," he said, helplessly, at last.

"Not to honest men," said Bermann; "pay your debts comes first, to our way of thinking."

Hendrik took up one of the sheep, con-



templated it for a minute, his feelings clashing in a kind of spiritual conflict, and then looked at the mountains with a prayer in his eyes.

"I will mark them," he said with a heavy sigh.

"That's good," said Bermann. "Now, remember, you've given your word and can't go back on it, for I leave town to-night."

"I will mark them,"

Hendrik repeated slowly, and he kept his word.

All through that long Winter Johann and Walther cut into blocks and carved out of them sheep, and Hendrik, handling the creatures and inwardly writhing over their defects, did an extra bit here and there to remedy the more glaring faults, and cut his mark in the bottom of the standard of each.

"Do you never look at a real sheep?" he asked Johann one day in despair.

"The god of sheep would do well if he could paralyze you for setting on ears like those," he cried wildly to Walther on another occasion.

And one day, when the artist-instinct, which must always be somewhat crushed out 'ere money can be made, was strongest, he flung away his knife and swore "No more!"

It was undoubtedly the time in which the world would have decreed the insane asylum; for oh, the wood-carver was, indeed, half-crazed. The Virgin had grown more distinct each day for months and with her holy face illuminating his every thought he had been forced to work steadily upon the deformed sheep. Is there another torture-chamber like that one—a soul craving souls and its power chained to labor unworthily?

It was a cold starlight night that night when Hendrik's spirit rushed into rebellion. The Alps were great in their grandeur, lofty in their heavenly towering. I have often thought how the Alpine *deva* must satisfy himself in being so free from all the living struggles of the universe. Surely the eternal circle of desire and



"She was dressed as a nun and her chin was bound in white"

fulfillment is perfect there; surely the Alps and the stars alike have learned their mission. What human struggle can fly to either without finding solace? Hendrik had learned that lesson. Desperately miserable, he strode out over the snow and asked of both as if both had been of Eleusis: "Is there a Wrong or a Right abroad in my life?"

Neither answered his query. The Alps only pitched the one word "life" back and forth among them till it died away on the farthest slope. The stars remained silent. Other men of other races had been answered—but not the wood-carver of the Alps that night.

After a long time he went back into the hut. He was cold and dizzy. He was ill. For some days he grew more and more ill. Then he became better and went on carving the sheep the same as before.

When Bermann came the next August he brought his wife with him. We have seen that he was persistent by nature and no one will be astonished that he had succeeded in marrying a girl who had personally preferred to be a nun. She was a very young girl, barely nineteen, with a Madonna face and big unhappy eyes.

Hendrik saw her and she saw him on the day when all the carvings came to the market-place. There was surprise, sorrow—curiosity, too—in the look that passed between them, but no words were exchanged.

Then a year went by and on the next August when Bermann came he came alone. It was all settled now that Hendrik was dying just as his mother had died—only younger.

"It doesn't matter," the buyer said to Pfalz, after the latter told him that bit of news. "I've found a man that can do better than sheep—a fellow that does figures. I'll buy his mark just as I did Hendrik's."

Bermann supposed that he had made the above remark in confidence to Pfalz,

but the next day, when he went to see Hendrik, he found that the latter had spoken of it to him.

"Then I need not mark the sheep any more," he asked eagerly.

This was an unexpected way for a man to look at the coming of a rival.

"Well, hardly that," said the astonished Bermann, "but perhaps later—"

Hendrik's face, pale and thin enough, goodness knows, fell quickly.

"Ah, I hoped too fast and too far."

A week later Bermann, having finished his tour of the upper valley, came back that way.

"Now, deuce take all carvers and their crazy ideas," he cried wrathfully to Pfalz. "I begin to think that there isn't one among them that has any right ideas in any direction! Do you know, that fellow up the mountain is a real genius and yet he wouldn't even see me. Two Virgins were finished and those I bought and that is all; not a promise—not a bargain—"

He almost choked in his vexation. He opened his sack as he spoke and took out the two figures which resembled the wonder of Nuremberg more than any others that have ever been made.

"Your wife was like that," said Pfalz, examining them.

"Yes, God rest her soul," said Bermann. "I shall get a big price for these," he added. "Oh, if I only might have talked to the carver."

"It will matter if Hendrik dies now, wont it?" said Pfalz, with Swiss innuendo, as dry and bracing as the land itself.

"I'm going to see if he can't copy one of these," Bermann said. "I'm going to ask him about it to-day."

But Hendrik, sitting by his door, shaping the shapeless from dawn to dark, looked at the Virgins and merely shook his head.

"If I were rich I would buy one," he said, holding the figure in his hand for a minute and contemplating its delicate



face. "It looks like your wife," he said, then, just as Pfalz had done.

"Yes. God rest her soul," said Bermann. "Then you think that you couldn't copy them, eh?"

"She is dead, then?" Hendrik asked without replying to the question.

"Yes, last Winter."

"Ah, I expect she wasn't able to live in the world," said Hendrik, softly; "couldn't learn to set her mark on crooked legged things, maybe—as I've done, eh, master?"

"Oh, they're not so bad," said Bermann, his sense of Hendrik's speech attaching itself to the sheep's legs, not to the esoteric meaning, "but if you could learn to carve figures—you wanted to once, you know—"

Hendrik started up abruptly. "I can learn nothing now; I can only mark sheep. The rest of me is dead—as dead as your wife."

Of course again there was an esoteric meaning which Bermann naturally failed to catch. But he did not urge Hendrik, rather regarding him as more crazy than ever and feeling as a consequence more disgusted than ever with his lunacy.

The next year when the buyer came Johann had gone to act as a guide and Walther was doing his military service. Hendrik was dying and there were no sheep at all. Bermann went to the mountain-hut just as a matter of form.

"Well, well, Hendrik, how's this?" he asked, more kindly than of old—possibly for the reason that Hendrik stretched out upon his narrow bed was a very pathetic sight indeed.

Hendrik smiled radiantly.

"She's going to be my wife now," he said; "think of it, master, she's going to be my wife now!"

"Who? What do you mean?"

"Ottillie. She's been here every day with me."



"My wife!" cried Bermann. "Why, she's dead!"

"My wife now," said Hendrik, happily.

"Listen, master. I don't mind telling you now. It won't take long; it's soon told.

"Long ago when she was a child—I knew her, but I was so poor. And my mother—you know how it was with my mother; I couldn't have my life to live. And then later there wouldn't be any life to live. The priest explained it all to her and to me. So Ottillie chose to become a nun—at least, I thought so. We were very simple, she and I—so she chose to become a nun. And I just lived and worked for the mother.

"Then, the master knows how the temptation of the sheep came into my life. That was wrong and I knew that it was wrong. But Ottillie was a nun, I thought, so it did not greatly matter. But then the master brought Ottillie up to me as his wife—then I saw how God works in the darkness and how we can never say 'It cannot matter.' It was plain to me that we had been overruled. I know how I was overruled and the master knows how, and he knows, too, why Ottillie did not become a nun. Then Ottillie died—God and the master know how, I don't know for I have never spoken to her since she was the master's wife.

"Yet I knew the night that she died because, as I sat here cold, tired, hungry, cutting my mark on the misshapen sheep, she came and stood beside me. She was

dressed as a nun again and her chin was bound in white and right across her forehead laid a smooth fold like snow. I sat still and looked at her, and just looking at her, I came to know much. Much was laid together clear in my mind at last. I had sinned, but Ottillie had only been sinned against. Therefore God,



who is very just, took her first, and left me a little longer. I was permitted to stay until I could atone. I have atoned. If the master will draw the cloth over there—" He raised his hand and pointed to a rude shelf that ran above the table on the opposite side of the room.

Bermann, quite nervous and shaking, rose, and drew aside the cloth!

There were a dozen of them there—some praying, some upright, every one different—and everyone Bermann's wife, and everyone a Virgin, too.

"It was I who carved those two that you bought," said Hendrik, smiling brightly, "and these also. They saved my reason. I turned to them when I went mad among the sheep."

"But, man! man!" almost shrieked Bermann, "why did you do sheep when you could do these? One of these is worth a hundred sheep."

Hendrik smiled. "Ah, who could risk it?" he said. "You might have set Johann and Walther to carve out these, too, then and even—who knows?—to carve my mark upon their poor work after I was gone. You see, master, it is the work and not the mark that counts. That's where your world goes wrong."

"God hasn't let you see things very clear, master," he went on, gently, "but I fancy it's the city way. Now, take the twelve Virgins with you, and say good-by

to me, for I give you what you long for, what you can take to the city and sell—and I go away to the golden mist and Ottillie, which is what I long for and what I have bought for my own in Heaven's market here on earth."

Hendrik died a few days later, and before the empty funeral-car returned from the graveyard the buyer, with the twelve likenesses of his dead wife, carefully packed in wool and labeled conspicuously "*Vorsichtig*," was half-way on his way to Basle. Little matters never ruffled him; that was what made him such a good business-man. He made his fortune—as fortunes go with buyers of carvings—and died rich and respected. In Genoa, in that grotesque cemetery-court of grotesque monuments, you may see his, splendidly done in a frock-coat that adapts itself to development in marble as gracefully as the cemetery adapts itself to the ideal conception of Death. He was buried in Genoa because he ended his life as a wealthy art-dealer in that handy place for American tourists to buy without having to get the goods over any frontiers.

As for Hendrik, he was buried amid the Alpine whiteness. No monument marked his grave. Some lives are like some stories—they finish very simply, and it is for those who come after to understand or not just as they please.





A Day of Discipline

BY ISABEL ECCLESTONE MACKAY

ILLUSTRATED BY BLANCHE V. FISHER

LITTLE Mrs. Cromleigh paused nervously, an irresolute hand upon the door-knob.

"You are sure you wont forget about the cough-medicine, Aunt Jane?"

Aunt Jane peered over her glasses.

"Yes," she replied shortly.

"You—you will remember that the dose is every two hours?"

"I hope I am still able to read the directions upon the bottle, Mary."

"Yes. I forgot it was 'on the bottle. And the doctor said it was so very important—"

She paused but Aunt Jane was too busily engaged in removing Jimmy's overshoes to answer.

"So *very important*," she repeated timidly but with desperation.

Aunt Jane stood up. "My dear," she said calmly, "what do you take me for?"

"Oh, of course I know it will be all

right! Well," with badly simulated cheerfulness, "I must be off. Come and kiss mother good-by, darlings. Good-by, Jimmy, pet. Good-by, Abby—oh, Aunt Jane."

"Yes, Mary."

"I wouldn't feel so nervous about the medicine if Jimmy were not so apt to have the croup. He had it three times last winter and I am always afraid of my life! Croup is such a horrid thing—"

"Yes, Mary," still patiently, "but—if you miss your car!"

"I know. I must go. Good-by, chicks. I would not mind so much, Aunt Jane, if—if you were used to children—"

She paused in embarrassment but Aunt Jane merely smiled. Such a superior smile! Little Mrs. Cromleigh hurried on. "I don't mean that you don't know how to manage them, only that you're not *used* to them. And croup is so sudden. The first symptoms—"

"Mary, you will certainly miss your car! Suppose you give me credit for a little elemental common-sense. A person doesn't have to be married in order to have that, I hope. Do I look like a person to forget cough-medicine?"

"N—no."

"Well, and if Jimmy gets the croup I know the first symptoms as well as you do."

"Yes, of course, I know that. There is a peculiar hoarse, brassy cough, a little fever, restlessness—"

"Do you *want* to miss your car, Mary?"

"Gracious! No. Good-by, sweethearts. Give mother a Scotch kiss. And be very good for Aunt Jane. You will do exactly what Auntie says, wont you, Abby?"

"Here's the car coming now, mother!" said Abby.

"Oh dear! Well, good-by! Abby, remind Aunt Jane about Jimmy's afternoon-sleep. Good-by, mother's precious Jimmy! Be sure to take his boots off—"

The wind slammed the door upon any further directions. Aunt Jane gave a very audible sigh of relief.

"What's the matter?" asked Abby curiously.

"Has 'oo dot a pain?" inquired Jimmy. "Will Jimmy rub 'oo?"

Aunt Jane declined the offer with suitable expressions of gratitude. It was a pity, she thought, that children so young should be so observant. It augured a sad want of reserve and self-control on the part of their parents—on the part of one parent, at any rate. Very likely Mary allowed these mites to guess at all her personal worries. She probably even ran to them for sympathy when her head ached or she felt out of sorts. Mary had always been a soft little thing, not the proper person to be a successful mother. It would be just like her to fondle them extravagantly one moment and helplessly spank them when they took advantage of her indulgence. Strange that such little, useless women always married and were—were supposed to be able to bring up children!

"Jimmy's got a bead in his mouth!" said Abby sharply.

Aunt Jane turned slowly. Children, she held, should never be startled. To run to Jimmy and slap him smartly on the back, though a natural impulse, would probably frighten the child into swallowing the bead.

"If Jimmy has a bead in his mouth," she remarked calmly, "he had better take it out."

"Not dot any bead!" declared Jimmy virtuously.

"Then you've swallowed it!" said Abby.

Jimmy nodded cheerfully. "All down red lane," he informed them. "Way down in tummy!"

"Do you suppose he really did?" asked Aunt Jane startled.

"Yes. He always does if mother doesn't get to him quick enough. She slaps him on the back and it falls out."

"A very wrong thing to do. A sudden start would be very apt to make him swallow it."

"He *has* swallowed it," said Abby practically.

"What kind of a bead was it?"

"Just a bead, a blue one."

Aunt Jane found herself wondering whether a blue bead was more dangerous than a white one but, knowing nothing whatever about the probable effect of a white one, was unable to come to any

conclusion. At any rate the bead was beyond recovery.

"Shall you get a doctor," asked Abby politely.

"Certainly not!" Aunt Jane's elemental common-sense asserted itself. "If little boys," fixing stern eyes upon Jimmy, "eat beads they must take the consequences."

"Me?" asked Jimmy poking himself with a fat finger.

Abby laughed. "Isn't he just too cute? Come to sister, precious, lovey, darling, Jimmy. He sha'n't have any old consequences if he did eat a bead! It's time for his cough-medicine now," she added, looking reproachfully at Aunt Jane.

This was provoking. It made it appear as if Aunt Jane had been going to be neglectful, while as a matter of fact she had had her eye on the clock for at least five minutes. Anyway, Abby was entirely too forward for so young a child; no doubt Mary encouraged it. She was exactly the type of woman to be half-dependent upon her children. It was time Abby was taught her place. Aunt Jane returned to the hanging up of caps and tippets and the storing away of gaiters and overshoes.

Abby fidgeted. "Will Jimmy take his nice medicine like a good boy?" she inquired insinuatingly.

"No—not nice, nassy!"

Abby's look was one of hurt surprise. "Not nassy—nice," she insisted. "Nice cough-medicine wants to make Jimmy better. Will Jimmy take it for sister?"

"Abby!" interrupted Aunt Jane. "Will you kindly leave the child to me? Of course Jimmy will take his medicine. No medicine is nice, but it is necessary when children are ill. Here, Jimmy, come and take it like a little man."

But the little man planted his sturdy feet and refused to stir.

"Come at once!" said Aunt Jane briskly.

The child stared at her.

"Do you hear me, Jimmy?"

Apparently he did for he came, very slowly.

"Take it!" sternly.

The baby mouth opened. There was a splutter, a choke, a white pinafore

spotted with dark brown stains, more stains upon the carpet and one stain, very dark and brown, upon the spotless fichu of Aunt Jane. This and an innocent baby-face, still staring.

"Oh, oh, how naughty!" gasped Aunt Jane. "How—how *very* naughty!"

"He always does that," said Abby interestedly.

"Then why didn't you say so?"

Abby opened her lips to reply and then closed them. She was a wise child and the atmosphere was too electric.

Aunt Jane poured out another spoonful. Her hand shook.

"Take it—at once!"

The baby mouth opened.

"Oh, Aunt Jane! He'll do it again. Mother always gives him a candy to swallow it!"

"I will *not* give him a candy," smoothly. "Jimmy, take this medicine at once. Abby, you are standing in the light."

With remarkable alacrity Abby changed her position for one which offered more cover and from behind Aunt Jane's skirts cooed enticingly to Jimmy. Then with a swift movement she exposed to view a marshmallow—pink, fat and floury.

"Take—it!" said Aunt Jane.

Jimmy, with eager eyes on the marshmallow, smiled, and took it.

"There!" said Aunt Jane. Her anger was quite dissipated in the warming consciousness of victory won. She continued mildly. "You may tell your mother, Abby, what a little firmness does. A child like this should never be bullied or bribed or spanked. It is most injurious. It is the foundation of many an undisciplined character—" Then, realizing her own theory as to the proper place for children in conversation, she stopped short.

"You may look over my 'Old Lady Books,' if you wish, Abby. Are your hands clean? I hope you do not wet your fingers to turn over the pages? Jimmy, you may play with the kitten—don't pull its tail! I have some letters to write."

Aunt Jane settled herself with a satisfied rustle. What a fuss people make over the management of children. And yet it is a simple thing—a little firmness, a

little elemental reasoning, a little self-control and the thing is done. As her correspondent happened to be a mother of five, Aunt Jane felt that it would be a gracious thing to pass along the benefit of her experience.

She wrote:

I have James' children staying with me for a week, and nicer children it would be hard to find; they both favor our side of the family. But so spoiled! Mary was never intended for a mother. She has nerves and a good mother should have no nerves. Already I have found out that she is in the habit of bribing Jimmy—the baby—to take his medicine. Apparently it has been his way to make a regular scene every two hours. But I have put a stop to that. I simply said "Take it" and in such a way that he took it at once—smiled over it, in fact. A child should feel the full pressure of kind authority.

They appear to be clever children. (James as a boy was remarkably smart.) For instance, when I happened to mention to Abby that the name of our yellow kitten was "Beans," she asked at once "Where is the other one?" And upon my asking what she meant she said, "I suppose there was a Pork and Beans." As a matter of fact there were two kittens and probably the other one's name was Pork, but, though I have often wondered about the outlandish name, I never thought of accounting for it in that way.

The children are to stay a week because Mary had to go to her mother who is seriously ill. (All her family are weakly.) She was absurdly nervous about leaving them—was actually afraid that I might neglect Jimmy's cough-medicine, or his afternoon-sleep and was very anxious to tell me the first symptoms of croup. As if I hadn't had croup dozens of times myself when I was his age. But Mary's nerves—

"Aunt Jane!"

"Yes, Abby."

"Jimmy's gone to sleep on the floor. It's half an hour after his afternoon-sleep time. He'll catch an awful cold. He's in a draught."

Aunt Jane tried to rise with dignity but the effort was not quite a success. In spite of herself she was on her feet a little quicker than she could have wished.

"No one ever took cold from a draught yet," she remarked calmly. "If people were not so afraid of fresh air, colds would be comparatively unknown. Does

he get undressed when he goes to bed in the afternoon?"

"No, just unbutton his frock and take his boots off and cover him up warm."

Aunt Jane smiled. She lifted the sleeping Jimmy and carefully deposited him upon the bed, removing with some difficulty, his shoes, and setting his frock well open at the neck. Then she lowered the window from the top and threw a light blanket over the child.

"It is nonsense to keep a child too warm," she assured the protesting Abby. "Too much heat is sure to wake a healthy child."

"He is awake now," said Abby. "You let the window bang. Now you'll have to sing to him."

The half-awake Jimmy stretched out sleepy arms. "Sing!" he demanded comfortably.

"Certainly not," said Aunt Jane. "Jimmy must go to sleep at once. Big boys don't need people to sing them to sleep." Then, seeing the ominous puckering of his lips—"You may have the kitten in bed with you if you like."

This ought to have been satisfactory, but it wasn't.

"Kitty scratch," said Jimmy holding out a fat wrist crossed by a long red mark.

"I wonder what he did to it?" asked Abby speculatively. "He wont go to sleep if you don't sing, Aunt Jane, and if he doesn't go to sleep he'll be as cross as a bear. Don't you know any sleepy songs?"

"No."

"Mother knows lovely ones. Can't you sing a hymn?"

"I could not. I am not going to sing at all. Jimmy must learn to go to sleep without it."

Heart-broken sobs from the bed and a wail from Abby, "Oh, Jimmy, lovey, don't! Abby will sing—"

"Abby, will you leave this child to me?" Then, suddenly weakening, as the sobs crescendoed into howls, "Jimmy! stop that noise! I shall allow your sister to sing to you to-day but after this you must go to bed entirely by yourself—do you understand?"

Jimmy acquiesced cheerfully. His day had no to-morrow. If he got what he

wanted to-day he was content—the vague to-morrow, when other people were going to score, had never happened yet.

Aunt Jane went back to her letter-writing. From the next room she could hear Abby's shrill, childish voice,

The old songs, she thought, were much more restful. What was that lullaby that her mother had been used to sing, rocking, with the tap-tap of the rockers to mark the time? Ah! now she had it! And the old, old tune! She hummed it over.



"Good-by, sweethearts"

Martha Fisher. 1908

"Sleep, baby, sleep;
The stars they are the sheep
The moon she is the shepherdess
The little stars are the lambs I guess—
Sleep, baby, sleep!"

The words and air were both new to Aunt Jane and she found herself vaguely disapproving of both. Entirely too jerky.

"Sleepy little curly head
On mother's arm reposing;
Time it is to be in bed
For the flowers are closing;
Thro' the purple of the sky
One bright star is peeping,
All the birdies quiet lie—
Sleeping! sleeping! sleeping!"

There was another verse, and for the

moment it escaped her, but the humming of the tune brought it back gradually, in the very words, the very tones her mother had used.

"Little eyes are heavy now
Little feet are weary!
Father, up in Heaven, Thou
Guard and keep my Dearie!
While in cups of coolest dew
Thirsty flowers are sleeping
Bless my little Flower, too—
Sleeping! sleeping! sleeping!"

The low voice, clear and sweet, was singing in her brain—and the soothing rock-rock of the chair. The tune was so pretty—perhaps she would sing it to Jimmy sometime—not when he was going to sleep, of course. It would be new to Jimmy. Mary would be sure to sing nothing but jerky, new-fangled things!

The singing in the bedroom stopped. Aunt Jane tiptoed to the door and looked in. They were both asleep—tear-stains on their faces. Whatever had they been crying about? The watcher felt uncomfortable—and—perhaps the room *was* a little cold! She took an eider-down comforter and spread it carefully over the sleeping children. Her elemental commonsense sniffed as she did it, but she did it.

She finished her letter in silence — not forgetting to settle things with her tyrant conscience by adding, "Abby and Jimmy are both asleep. What a blessing it is that the old-fashioned rocking-chair has been abandoned. What a dangerous thing it was—so bad for the brain! Children now-a-days go to sleep on the bed in the only proper way. A good, cool—almost cold—room, light covering, and quiet is what a child needs. I do not approve of singing a child to sleep!" Yet she hummed unconsciously:

"Sleepy little curly head
On mother's arm reposing—"

And the rock-rock of the much-to-be-condemned rocking-chair made music on a long varnished floor!

The children were tired and slept long. When they awakened it was almost time for their early supper. Aunt Jane believed in early supper and early bedtime and Abby's assurance that they couldn't possibly sleep when they had just wakened up was passed by in chastening silence. So were her suggestions as to what might be wise for supper. Abby thought that quince preserves or plum-jam and two kinds of cake—a lemon kind and a raisin kind—and pie—almost any kind of pie—would be at once suitable and delightful. Aunt Jane's mind turned irresistibly toward boiled eggs

(soft) and corn-starch custard. Abby hated corn-starch in any form and she liked an egg boiled hard, or not at all. Her mother had read in the paper that it was all nonsense about soft-boiled eggs being more digestible. Aunt Jane pointed out that anyone with a little elemental common-sense could see that the paper didn't know what it was talking about. Hard-boiled eggs were, and always would be, another name for early death, besides being very liable to make little girls see saw-horses in the middle of the night. Abby had never seen a saw-horse and would rather enjoy the experience. But here Aunt Jane put a period. She said that was enough, it was not a little girl's place to argue.

As for Jimmy, he would eat anything and everything, but he wanted tea in his own cup and he wanted to pour it out "mineownself." Tea! For a child going on three years! And did his mother allow him to have it? Apparently she did. Well, it was only another thing to add to the list of Aunt Jane's reforms. Milk he might have, all he wanted. But as he didn't want any, this fell rather flat.

"He hates milk," explained Abby. "Mother gave him powders in it until he got so he wouldn't take it."

"Wouldn't?" asked Miss Jane with mild emphasis.



"Who? Me?"

"It made him sick. And, Aunt Jane, soft-boiled eggs make me sick. I don't feel very hungry. Please I don't want any supper. Please may I play with kitty instead?"

"Kitty gone," informed Jimmy. "Jimmy put kitty to sleep in box."

Aunt Jane started. She remembered that she had not seen Beans for some time.

"What box? I sincerely hope he hasn't put that cat in the linen-box! Tell me directly, Jimmy, where is the kitten?"

But Jimmy was vague. He showed the scratch on his arm and repeated his information about the box but further declined to go. The linen-chest box was explored without result, as were also all other boxes which might have been available.

Abby began to look frightened. "Mother always watched him when he has our kitten," she said. "He doesn't understand about kittens. He put the next-door kitten down the cistern."

"He couldn't have put this kitten down the cistern," snapped Aunt Jane. The useless search was beginning to tell on her. The kitten was not in the wood-box, nor anywhere else apparently.

"Show me where that kitten is at once, Jimmy!"

"Jimmy, please show sister where kitty is!"

"In box," he informed them obligingly.

"But there isn't any box," said the exasperated Aunt Jane.

Abby pointed with a slim finger: "There's a box."

"That! That little box? The kitten would smother in that. That's a tea-caddy. It is very interesting. Would you like to see inside?"

Abby nodded. She was eyeing the box in a fascinated way.

"It is lined with—oh! oh!"

Abby burst into tears. "Oh! don't spank him, Aunt Jane! Please don't spank him. He doesn't understand about kittens."

Aunt Jane was quite speechless.

"Is it dead, Aunt Jane? Oh, Jimmy how *could* you! The poor pretty, little kitten!" Abby howled unrestrainedly.

"Kitty scratch," said Jimmy.

Aunt Jane turned. Even yet her speech came slowly, but what there was of it did not lack in expression.

"You wicked, wicked, *wicked* boy!"

"Me?" asked Jimmy, opening wide eyes and poking himself deliciously.

Abby gave a half-strangled laugh but Aunt Jane was adamant. She did not know herself. Violent anger was to her an almost unknown experience. She found it necessary to shut herself out in the wash-shed until the overpowering impulse to spank Jimmy—hard—had subsided. It took exactly ten minutes for her strong conviction as to the evil of this mode of correction to assert itself.

When she reentered the room Abby looked apprehensive and even the callous Jimmy seemed uneasily expectant.

"Please don't spank him!" implored Abby under her breath.

Aunt Jane lifted the child and placed him in his high-chair. Then she got another chair and sat down in front of him.

"He doesn't understand about kittens," from Abby, still *sotto voce*.

"Jimmy," said Aunt Jane, "the poor little kitten is dead, quite dead."

"He doesn't know about being dead!" said Abby miserably.

"Then it is time he did!"

"Jimmy, the poor, pretty kitten will never play again."

"Not scratch?" asked Jimmy looking down at his wounded wrist.

"No. It is dead. Dead! It will have to be put away in the dark ground in a hole."

"Jimmy dig hole?"

"Certainly not. Jimmy will never play with kitty again. Kitty is *dead*."

It was time he was beginning to attach some idea to the word. Aunt Jane's voice was properly tragic.

Abby began to cry but Jimmy was merely thoughtful. He was evidently trying to explain to himself this strange perturbation of grown-up aunts.

Then suddenly his baby face grew beautifully tender. He reached forward in his high-chair and Aunt Jane felt a small fat hand pat her face.

"Kitty gone?" asked Jimmy. "Don't cry. Jimmy get 'oo novver kitty."

Aunt Jane tried to rally for one more effort, but a vigorous kiss planted in the proper place for kisses is a delightfully effective obstacle to conversation; and one which, for Aunt Jane, had all the charm of novelty. She sighed and mentally consigned Beans to an unavenged grave. After all, the child was only a baby. Perhaps she should have watched him more closely—but he had been so good and quiet! Aunt Jane had yet to learn the dangers of quietness.

"What are we going to do now?" asked Abby when the supper—a compromised supper—was safely over.

"You are going to bed, of course. When I was your age I went to bed at six."

Abby's look was one of half-incredulous pity. If that were so, she thought, *if* that were so, it was no longer a wonder that Aunt Jane was crosser than mother. But all she said was, "If we really have to go to bed, I had better go first. It will be easier to make Jimmy come."

Aunt Jane considered. She could see no harm in the suggestion. It might be taken as conceding her inability to manage Jimmy unaided and alone but she felt rather tired. There would be plenty of opportunity for demonstrating her ability to-morrow.

"Very well, then. But—doesn't he have a bath?"

"Yes. In the morning."

"But look at his face and hands."

They were certainly grimy. Jimmy himself observed them with virtuous disgust.

"Dirty!" he remarked. Then, insinuatingly, "Jimmy wash?"

"No you wont," said Abby quickly.

"Abby!" Aunt Jane's voice was firm. "*Will* you leave the child to me? Of course his hands shall be washed. I am delighted that he realizes how dirty they are. No child ever really likes dirt."

Abby prepared for bed in silence. Aunt Jane turned down the clothes.

"Would you like to wait and say your prayers with Jimmy when I bring him in?" she asked kindly.

"Jimmy doesn't say prayers—he's too little."

"Too little!" Aunt Jane was genuinely

shocked. "He can talk can't he? A child should be taught to say a prayer as soon as he can lisp. Not to do so is to rob babyhood of one of its sweetest privileges. It is the only sure way of doing away with a child's causeless fear of the dark." Aunt Jane was quoting now. "His baby-hand touches the unseen. He is so sure of the angel guardians beside his bed that he almost sees them—"

"Oh—oh, don't, Aunt Jane!" Abby was visibly whiter.

"Don't what?"

"Oh, nothing. Only don't tell Jimmy about it. He might believe it, and he'd be awfully scared."

Aunt Jane sat down on the bed.

"What is this, Abby! Of what would Jimmy be frightened?"

"Angels—round his bed. He'd scream. He wouldn't know you were only talking."

"Do you mean," began Aunt Jane weakly, "that you—that you don't want angels to watch over you? That you don't believe—"

Abby glanced nervously around.

"Do you mean that you don't believe that when good little boys and girls are sleeping a beautiful, strong, guardian Spirit watches beside them—"

Abby burst into tears.

"Oh, don't!" she sobbed. "I d—d—don't like it!"

Aunt Jane was beaten—and very much annoyed.

"Stop crying!" she commanded. "A big girl like you!"

Abby stilled her sobs in the pillow. "I want my mother," she wailed. "I want my mother."

"Jimmy will hear you!"

It was a veritable intuition. The sobs grew softer and ceased. A rather piteous little face came out of the pillow. Aunt Jane kissed it.

"You don't need to have an angel if you are frightened," she whispered. She felt horribly guilty. It was to her the next thing to telling the child that she might be a free-thinker if she liked. But it had to be done—she couldn't have the child in nervous hysterics. Abby hung about her neck.

"I don't mind God," in whispered



She exposed to view a marshmallow

confidence, "but I'm scairt of angels!"

Aunt Jane's heart was soft as she went back into the sitting-room for Jimmy. Abby's idea of the harmlessness of God had shocked her, it is true—still—children have strange ideas! Perhaps Abby knew some things about God which Aunt Jane had not found out yet. At least she was not afraid of Him. Aunt Jane had always been a little bit afraid.

The sitting-room was empty. Where was the child? Probably he had wandered into the kitchen in search of the kitten. It had been only too apparent that he "didn't know about—being dead."

"Jimmy!" she called gently. A faint splashing answered her.

She opened the kitchen-door.

It was only a kitchen. But it was the pride of Aunt Jane's life. Nay, it was almost the object of her idolatry. Nowhere was such another kitchen—"Immaculate" was written upon its borders!

And now!

Jimmy had dragged a chair to the sink and had turned on a tap—two taps. He had also neglected to turn them off again. Aunt Jane had never allowed linoleum in her kitchen. Rag-carpet, beautiful, new, spotless, with plenty of cheerful red (dyed red) was Aunt Jane's ideal covering for a kitchen-floor! Perhaps it is not necessary to pile up words. Everyone who has an ounce of imagination can do something with plenty of water and cheerfully red rag-carpets!

Jimmy himself was as wet as if he had worn a bathing-suit and as unconscious of wrong-doing as the water which dripped from the hem of his garments. He beamed upon Aunt Jane.

"Jimmy wash hands!" he said, holding them up, pink and fresh and soapy. "Nice, clean hands now!"

Aunt Jane said nothing. There was nothing to say—and a consuming desire for action, instant and effective action, possessed her. She turned off the taps and she *spanked Jimmy*. For the first time in her well ordered life theories proved inadequate.

He howled so terribly that it took two pieces of cake and a marshmallow to quiet him. It is wrong to stop children crying in this way, but unless you wish to have the neighbors coming in to interfere it is necessary to stop them in some way. And it was Abby who suggested and provided the marshmallow. Failing that, Aunt Jane had wild thoughts of a gag. She had never before realized what it is to have a baby hold its breath until it is blue in the face and then howl as if in the extremes of torture. But the marshmallow did the trick and it was a smiling, dimpling baby who jumped up and down on the bed to make the springs go "bump." When at last he was lying down he tugged softly at Aunt Jane's hand.

"Lie down—little while!" he coaxed.

"I can't," weakly.

"Just a little while—sing to Jimmy."

"I can't."

Two fat arms stole round her neck. "I lub you truly," said the coaxing voice.

Aunt Jane felt her heart grow warm.

"He always says that to mother when he can't get her to sing any other way," explained Abby.

Aunt Jane's heart grew cold again.

"No, Jimmy, I can't—"

"I give you Scotch kiss."

And immediately Aunt Jane felt her nose seized firmly and her head dragged down. "That way!" said Jimmy giving a sounding smack. "Now sing!"

Aunt Jane sang.

"Sleepy little curly head

On mother's arm reposing—"

And so on to the end.

It was wonderful the satisfaction it gave her. She remembered the words so well, too! And when at the last Abby said "That's a lovely one, Aunt Jane," she felt delightfully flattered. Besides, Jimmy was almost asleep. She kissed them both, covered them warmly, and tip-toed out of the room. It was against her theory to tip-toe; children ought to get accustomed to ordinary noises.

By the time she was comfortably settled with her book in her armchair her state of mind was such that she could contemplate the placing of a rug over the spoiled kitchen-carpet without too much bitterness. As a matter of fact, she had told Jimmy that his hands needed washing, though it had never occurred to her that he might do the deed himself. Remorse smote her as she remembered how Abby had been snubbed for trying to prevent it. Although Abby was really too forward for her age.

The kitten was dead—Aunt Jane had liked the kitten; and the kitchen-carpet was ruined. Aunt Jane had loved the kitchen-carpet. But there had been something about that "I lub you truly," even at second-hand, which seemed to make up for these things. And, anyway, they were asleep now and to-morrow things would be better. She, herself, would be more alert. She would not confuse quietness with rectitude, and she would show Abby that she knew how to manage a child like Jimmy by firmness—gentle firmness—no spanking! True, she had spanked him—but how necessary had it been? At least, it hadn't been necessary. If she had had time to think a more excellent way would have appeared. But it had happened when she had been tried beyond endurance. It would not happen again.

And she had one victory to look back upon. How nicely he had taken the medicine! Had it been Mary, doubtless bribery would have been resorted to. Bribery, the child's curse! She rather fancied the expression. It would make an excellent title for a paper.

Everything would be easier after a good night's rest. She would retire early and in the morning her nerves would be in proper shape.



"Aunt Jane!" A small white figure stood timidly at the door.

"Abby—go back to bed at once."

"Yes, Aunt Jane. But how are you going to know if Jimmy gets the croup?"

"What!"

"Mother always sleeps on a cot in our room when Jimmy is likely to have the croup." Abby's voice was miserable.

"Is Jimmy going to have the croup?"

"I—I think he is."

Aunt Jane closed her book. "Go back to bed, Abby. I'll sleep out here on the sofa."

"Yes, Aunt Jane. You'll run quick, wont you?"

Aunt Jane assured her that she would, and, as she covered her up again, she felt Jimmy's forehead. It was certainly hot.

She returned to the sitting-room and in an old medical-book looked up "Croup."

"Croup—a most distressing complaint. Often fatal. Usually attacks the child in the night. Prompt remedies absolutely essential, otherwise the patient may strangle."

Aunt Jane shuddered. She had had no idea of the awfulness of croup. She remembered how only that day she had written disparagingly of its terrors. And yet it was possible that the patient might strangle. Nonsense! She, herself, had had croup dozens of times—plenty of children had croup. Nevertheless, it might be as well to look up the doctor's number in the telephone-book.

And what to do before he came? The book recommended turpentine and oil and ipecac—none of these happened to be in the house—and spoke vaguely of "prompt and strenuous efforts to relieve the little sufferer." Aunt Jane tried hard to remember what form these efforts should take. Hot water—she was sure that hot water came in somewhere. But where? She had forgotten just exactly where the hot water came in!

She lay down upon the sofa—but not to sleep. She was listening for a cough, a hoarse, brassy cough. Wasn't it a hoarse, brassy cough that Mary had cited as the first symptom? Or was it? Perhaps when the hoarse, brassy cough came it would be too late to do anything! And she had not yet succeeded in remembering what to do with the hot water. All

her elemental common-sense, all her self-confidence and resourcefulness seemed suddenly to desert her. She could not reason, for the feeling which gripped her was quite unreasoning. *If that child got the croup he might choke before she could save him!*

It was a changed Aunt Jane who stole into the children's room and touched the sleeping Abby on the shoulder.

"Abby," she whispered, "wake up! What does your mother do with hot water when Jimmy has the croup?"

Abby awakened with a start. Her little hand shot out feeling for her brother's hands. She felt them, sleepily.

"He isn't going to have any croup," she answered, yawning. "See, his hands are quite cool and damp, and he hasn't coughed once. Listen how nice he's breathing! Hadn't you better go to bed, Aunt Jane?"

Aunt Jane went back to the sofa. She sat down suddenly. She found, to her own surprise, that she was trembling.

"Nerves," she murmured. "Nerves! A good mother should have no nerves. And there'll be to-morrow and the next day and the rest of the week!" She laughed a little. "Poor Mary!"



"A good mother should have no nerves"



"They creased ye blamed near for keeps"

The Hold Up

BY CLARENCE E. MULFORD

Author of "Bar-20," "The Orphan," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL CRAWFORD

I

THE baggage smoking-car reeked with strong tobacco, the clouds of smoke shifting with the air currents, and dimly through the haze could be seen several men. Three of these were playing cards near the baggage-room door, while two more lounged in a seat half way down the aisle and on the other side of the car. Across from the card-players, reading a magazine, was a fat man, and near the water cooler was a dyspeptic looking in-

dividual who was grumbling about the country through which he was passing.

The first five, as their wearing apparel proclaimed, were not of the kind usually found on trains, not the drummer, the tourist, or the farmer. Their heads were covered with heavy *sombreros*, their coats were of thick, black woolens, and their shirts were also of wool. Around the throat of each was a large handkerchief, knotted at the back; their trousers were protected by "chaps," of which three were of goatskin. The boots were tight-

fitting, narrow, and with high heels, and to them were strapped heavy spurs. Around the waist, hanging loosely from one hip, each wore a wide belt containing fifty cartridges in the loops, and supporting a huge Colt's revolver, which rested against the thigh.

The cowboys were happy and were trying to sing but, owing to different tastes, there was noticeable a lack of harmony. "Oh Susanna" never did go well with "Annie Laurie," and as for "Dixie," it was hopelessly at odds with the other two. But they were happy, exuberantly so, for they had enjoyed their relaxation in the city and now were returning to the station where their horses were waiting to carry them over the two hundred miles which lay between their ranch and the nearest railroad-station.

For a change the city had been pleasant, but after they had spent three days there it lost its charm and would not have been acceptable to them even as a place in which to die. They had spent their money, smoked "top-notcher" cigars, seen the "shows" and feasted each as his fancy dictated, and as behooved cowpunchers with money in their pockets. Now they were glad that every hour reduced the time of their stay in the smoky, jolting, rocking train, for they did not like trains, and this train was particularly bad. So they passed the hours as best they might and waited impatiently for the stop at Conway, where they had left their horses. Their trip to the "fence country" was now a memory, and they chafed to be again in the saddle on the open, wind swept range, where miles were insignificant and the silence soothing.

The fat man, despairing of reading, watched the card-players and smiled in good humor as he listened to their conversation, while the dyspeptic, nervously twisting his newspaper, wished that he were at his destination. The baggage-room door opened and the conductor looked down on the card-players and grinned. Waffles, foreman of the O-Bar-O, moved over in the seat.

"Sit down, Simms, an' take a hand," he invited. The two were well acquainted, for Waffles had ridden several times

with the jolly official. Laughter arose continually and the fat man joined in it, leaning forward more closely to watch the play.

Lefty Allen tossed his cards face down on the board and grinned at the onlooker.

"Salvation shore bluffs more on a variegated flush than any man I ever saw."

"Call him once in a while and he'll get cured of it," laughed the fat man, bracing himself as the train swung around a sharp turn.

"He's too smart," growled Salvation. "He tried that an' found I didn't have no variegated flushes. Come on, Lefty; if yore playing cards, put up."

Farther down the car, their feet resting easily on the seat in front of them, Tex Le Blanc and Curley Tate puffed slowly at their large, black cigars and spoke infrequently, both idly watching the plain flit by in wearying sameness, and both tired and lazy from doing nothing but ride.

"Blast th' cars, anyhow," grunted Tex, but he received no reply, for his companion was too disgusted to say anything.

A startling, sudden increase in the roar of the train and a gust of hot, sulphurous smoke caused Tex to look up at the brakeman, who came down the swaying aisle as the door slammed shut.

"Phew!" he exclaimed, genially. "Why in thunder don't you fellows smoke up?"

Tex blew a heavy ring, stretched energetically and grinned: "Much farther to Conway?"

"Oh, you don't get off for three hours yet," laughed the brakeman.

"That's shore a long time to ride this bronc train," moodily complained Curley as the singing began again. "She shore pitches a plenty," he added.

The train-hand smiled and seated himself on the arm of the front seat:

"Oh, it might be worse."

"Not this side of Mexico," replied Curley with decision, watching his friend, who was slapping the cushions to see the dust fly out: "Hey, let up on that, will you! There's dust aplenty without no help from you!"

The brakeman glanced at the card-players and then at Tex.

"Do your friends always sing like that?" he inquired.

"Mostly, but sometimes it's worse."

"On the level?"

"Shore enough; they're singing 'Dixie' now. It's their best song."

"That aint 'Dixie!'"

"Yes it is: that is, most of it."

"Well, then, what's the rest of it?"

"Oh, them's variations of their own," remarked Curley, yawning and stretching. "Just wait till they starts something sentimental; you'll shore weep."

"I hope they stick to the variations. Say, you must be a pretty nifty gang on the shoot, aint you?"

"Oh, some," answered Tex.

"I wish you fellers had been aboard with us one day about a month ago. We was the wrong end of a hold-up, and we got cleaned out proper, too."

"An' how many of 'em did you get?" asked Tex quickly, sitting bolt upright.

The fat man suddenly lost his interest in the card-game and turned an eager ear to the brakeman, while the dyspeptic stopped punching holes in his time-card and listened. The card-players glanced up and then returned to their game, but they, too, were listening.

The brakeman was surprised: "How many did we get! Gosh! we didn't get none! They was six to our five."

"How many cards did you draw, you Piute?" asked Lefty.

"None of yore business; I aint dealing, an' I wouldn't tell you if I was," retorted Salvation.

"Well, I can ask, can't I?"

"Yes—you can, an' did."

"You didn't get none?" cried Tex, doubting his ears.

"I should say not!"

"An' they owned th' whole train?"

"They did."

Curley laughed. "Th' cleaning up must have been sumptuous an' elevating."

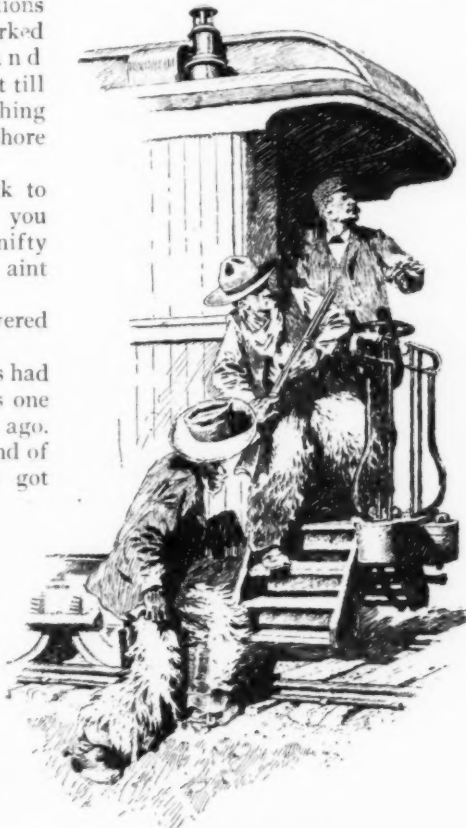
"Every time I holds threes' he allus has better," growled Lefty to Simms.

"On th' level, we couldn't do a thing," the brakeman ran on. "There's a water-tank a little farther on, and they must 'a' climbed aboard there when we stopped to connect. When we got into the gulch the train slowed down and stopped and I started to get up to go out and see what was the matter; but I saw *that* when I looked down a gun-barrel. The man at the throttle end of it told me to put up my hands, but they were up as high then as I could get 'em without

climbin' on the top of the seat.

"Can't you listen and play at th' same time?" Lefty asked Salvation.

"I wasn't countin' on takin' the gun away from 'him," the brakeman continued, "for I was too busy watchin' for the slug to come out of the hole. Pretty soon somebody on the outside whistled and then another feller come in the car; he was the one that did the cleanin' up. All this time there had been a lot of shootin' outside, but now it got worse.



"Come on, fellers," cried Tex

Then I heard another whistle and the engine puffed up the track, and about five minutes later there was a big explosion, and then our two robbers backed out of the car among the rocks shootin' back regardless. They busted a lot of windows."

"An' you didn't git none," grumbled Tex, regretfully.

"When we got to the express-car, what had been pulled around the turn," continued the brakeman, not heeding the interruption, "we found a wreck. And we found the engineer and fireman standin' over the express-messenger, too scared to know he wouldn't come back no more. The car had been blowed up with dynamite, and his fighting soul went with it. He never knowed he was licked."

"An' nobody tried to help him!" Tex exclaimed, wrathfully, now.

"Nobody wanted to die with him," replied the brakeman.

"Well," cried the fat man, suddenly reaching for his valise, "I'd like to see anybody try to hold me up!" Saying which he brought forth a small revolver.

"You'd be praying out of your bald spot about that time," muttered the brakeman.

Tex and Curley turned, perceived the weapon, and then exchanged winks.

"That's a fine shootin'-iron, stranger," gravely remarked Tex.

"You bet it is!" purred the owner, proudly. "I paid six dollars for that gun."

Lefty smothered a laugh and his friend grinned broadly: "I reckon that'd kill a man—if you stuck it in his ear."

"Pshaw!" snorted the dyspeptic, scornfully. "You wouldn't have time to get it out of that grip. Think a train-robber is going to let you unpack? Why don't you carry it in your hip-pocket, where you can get at it quickly?"

There were smiles at the stranger's belief in the hip-pocket fallacy but no one commented upon it.

"Wasn't there no passengers aboard when you was stuck up?" Lefty asked the conductor.

"Yes, but you can't count passengers in on a deal like that."

Tex looked around aggressively: "We're passengers, aint we?"

"You certainly are."

"Well, if any misguided maverick gets it into his fool head to stick us up, you see what happens. Don't you know th' fellers outside have all th' worst o' th' deal?"

"They have not!" cried the brakeman.

"They've got all the best of it," asserted the conductor emphatically. "I've been inside, and I know."

"Best nothing!" cried Tex. "They are on th' ground, watching a danger-line over a hundred yards long, full of windows and doors. Then they brace th' door of a car full of people. While they climb up th' steps they can't see inside, an' then they go an' stick their heads in plain sight. It's an even break who sees th' other first, with th' men inside training their guns on th' glass in th' door!"

"Darned if you aint right!" enthusiastically cried the fat man.

Tex laughed: "It all depends on th' men inside. If they aint used to handling guns, 'course they wont try to fight. We've been in so many gun-festivals that we wouldn't stop to think. If any coin-collector went an' stuck his ugly face against th' glass in that door he'd turn a back-flip off'n th' platform before he knowed he was hit. Is there any chance for a stick-up to-day, think?"

"Can't tell," replied the brakeman. "But this is about the time we have the section-camps' pay on board," he said, going into the baggage end of the car.

Simms leaned over close to Waffles: "It's on this train now, and I'm worried to death about it. I wish we were past Conway."

"Don't worry none, then," the foreman replied. "It'll get past Conway, all right."

Tex looked out of the window again and saw that there was a gradual change in the nature of the scenery, for the plain was becoming more broken each succeeding mile. Small woods occasionally hurtled past and banks of cuts flashed by like mottled yellow curtains, shutting off the view. Scrub timber stretched away on both sides, a billowy sea of green, and miniature valleys lay

under the increasing number of trestles twisting and winding towards a high horizon.

Tex yawned again: "Well, it's none o' our funeral. If they let us alone I don't reckon we'll take a hand, not even to bust up this monotony."

Curley laughed derisively: "Oh, no! Why, you couldn't sit still nohow with a fight going on, an' you know it. An' if it's a stick-up! Wow!"

"Who gave you any say in this?" demanded his friend. "Anyhow, you aint no angel o' peace, not nohow!"

"Mebby they'll plug yore new *sombrero*," laughed Curley.

Tex felt of the article in question: "If any two-laigged wolf plugs my war-bonnet he'll be some sorry, an' so'll his folks," he asserted, rising and going down the aisle for a drink.

Curley turned to the brakeman, who had just returned: "Say," he whispered, "get off at th' next stop, shoot off a gun, an' yell, just for fun. Go ahead, it'll be better'n a circus."

"Nix on the circus, says I," hastily replied the other. "I aint looking for no excitement, an' I aint paid to amuse th' passengers. I hope we don't even run over a track-torpedo this side of Conway."

Tex returned, and as he came even with them the train slowed.

"What are we stopping for?" he asked, his hand going to his holster.

"To take on water; the tank's right ahead."

"What have you got?" asked Salvation.

"None of yore business," replied Lefty. "You call when you gets any curious."

"Oh piffle!" yawned Tex, leaning back lazily. "I shore wish I was on my cayuse pounding leather on th' home trail."

"Me, too," grumbled Curley, staring out of the window. "Well, we're moving again. It wont be long now before we gets out of this."

II

The card-game continued, the low spoken terms being interspersed with

casual comment; Tex exchanged infrequent remarks with Curley, while the brakeman and conductor stared out of the same window. There was noticeable an air of anxiety, and the fat man tried to read his magazine with his thoughts far from the printed page. He read and re-read a single paragraph several times without gaining the slightest knowledge of what it meant, while the dyspeptic passenger fidgeted more and more in his seat, like one sitting on hot coals, anxious and alert.

"We're there now," suddenly remarked the conductor, as the bank of a cut blanked out the view. "It was right here where it happened; the turn's farther on."

"How many cards did you draw, Waffles?" asked Lefty.

"Three; drawin' to a straight flush," laughed the dealer.

"Here's the turn! We're through all right," exclaimed the brakeman.

Suddenly there was a rumbling bump, a screeching of air-brakes and the grinding and rattle of couplings and pins as the train slowed down and stopped with a suddenness that snapped the passengers forward and back. The conductor and brakeman leaped to their feet, where the latter stood quietly during a moment of indecision.

A shot was heard and the conductor's hand, raised quickly to the whistle-rope sent blast after blast shrieking over the land. A babel of shouting burst from the other coaches and, as the whistle shrieked without pause, a shot was heard close at hand and the conductor reeled suddenly and sank into a seat, limp and silent.

At the first jerk of the train the card-players threw the board from across their knees, scattering the cards over the floor, and crouching, gained the center of the aisle, intently peering through the windows, their Colt's ready for instant use. Tex and Curley were also in the aisle, and when the conductor had reeled Tex's Colt exploded and the man outside threw up his arms and pitched forward.

"Good boy, Tex!" cried Waffles, who was fighting mad.

Tex wheeled and crouched, watching

the door, and it was not long before a masked face appeared on the farther side of the glass. Tex fired and a splotch of red stained the white mask as the robber fell against the door and slid to the platform.

"Hear that shooting?" cried the brakeman. "They're at the messenger. They'll blow him up!"

"Come on, fellers!" cried Tex, leaping towards the door, closely followed by his friends.

They stepped over the obstruction on the platform and jumped to the ground on the side of the car farthest from the robbers.

"Shoot under the cars for legs," whispered the foreman. "That'll bring 'em down where we can get 'em."

"Which is a good idea," replied Curley, dropping quickly and looking under the car.

"Somebody's going to be surprised, all right," exulted Tex.

The firing on the other side of the train was heavy, being for the purpose of terrifying the passengers and to forestall concerted resistance. The robbers could not distinguish between the many reports and did not know they were being opposed, or that two of their number were dead.

A whinney reached Tex's ears and he located it in a small grove ahead of him: "Well, we know where th' cayuses are in case they make a break."

A white and scared face peered out of the cab-window and Tex stopped his finger just in time, for the inquisitive man wore the cap of fireman.

"You idiot!" muttered Tex.

A pair of legs ran swiftly along the other side of the car and Curley and Waffles fired instantly. The legs bent, their owner falling forward behind the rear truck, where he was screened from sight.

"They had it their own way before!" gritted Waffles. "Now we'll see if they can stand th' iron!"

By this time Tex and Curley were crawling under the express-car and were so preoccupied that they did not notice the faint blue streak of smoke immediately over their heads. Then Curley

glanced up to see what it was that sizzed, saw the glowing end of a three-inch fuse, and blanched. It was death not to dare and his hand shot up and back, and the dynamite cartridge sailed far behind him to the edge of the embankment, where it hung on a bush.

"Good!" panted Tex. "We'll pay 'em for that!"

"They're worse'n rustlers!"

They could hear the messenger running about over their heads, dragging and up-ending heavy objects against the doors of the car, and Tex laughed grimly:

"Luck's with this messenger, all right."

"It ought to be—he's a fighter."

"Where are they? Have they tumbled to our game?"

"They're waiting for the explosion, you chump."

"Stay where you are then. Wait till they come out to see what's th' matter with it."

Curley snorted: "Wait nothing!"

"All right, then; I'm with you. Get out of my way."

"I've been in situations some peculiar, but this beats 'em all," Curley chuckled, crawling forward.

The robber by the car truck revived enough to realize that something was radically wrong, and shouted a warning as he raised himself on his elbow to fire at Waffles, but the foreman shot first.

As Tex and Curley emerged from beneath the car and arose to their feet there was a terrific explosion and they were knocked to the ground, while a sudden, heavy shower of stones and earth rained down over everything. The two punchers were not hurt and they arose to their feet in time to see the engineer and fireman roll out of the cab and crawl along the track on their hands and knees, dazed and weakened by the concussion.

Suddenly, from one of the day-coaches, a masked man looked out, saw the two punchers, and cried:

"It's all up! Save yourselves!"

As Tex and Curley looked around, still dazed, he fired at them, the bullet singing past Tex's ear. Curley smothered

a curse and reeled as his friend grasped him. A wound over his right eye was bleeding profusely and Tex's face cleared of its look of anxiety when he realized that it was not serious.

"They creased you! Blamed near got you for keeps!" he cried, wiping away the blood with his sleeve.

Curley, slightly stunned, opened his eyes and looked about confusedly: "Who done that! Where is he!"

"Don't know, but I'll shore find out," Tex replied. "Can you stand alone?"

Curley pushed himself free and leaned against the car for support: "Course I can! Git that cuss!"

When Waffles heard the robber shout the warning he wheeled and ran back, intently watching the windows and doors of the car for trouble:

"We'll finish yore tally right here!" he muttered.

When he reached the smoker he turned and went towards the rear, where he found Lefty and Salvation lying under the platform. Salvation was looking back and guarding their rear, while his companion watched the clump of trees where the second herd of horses was known to be. Just as they were joined by their foreman, they saw two men run across the track, fifty yards distant, and into the grove, both going so rapidly as to give no chance for a shot at them.

"There they are!" shouted Waffles, opening fire on the grove.

At that instant Tex turned the rear platform and saw the brakeman leap out of the door with a Winchester in his hands. The puncher sprang up the steps and wrenched the rifle from its owner, and, tossing it to the foreman, cried: "Here, this is better!"

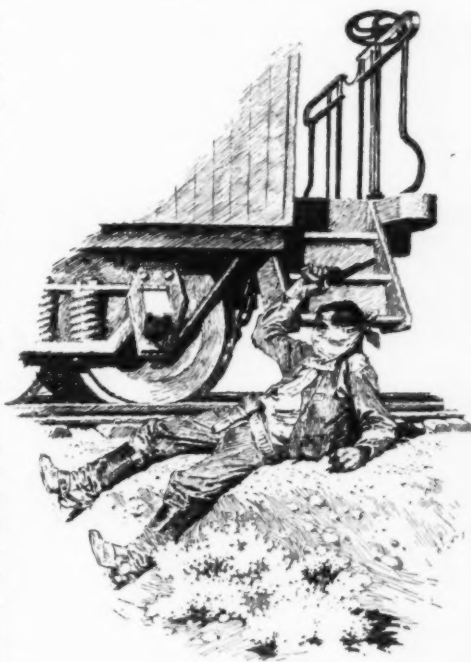
"Too late," grunted Waffles, looking up, but Tex had become lost to sight among the rocks along the right of way: "If I only had this a minute ago!" he grumbled.

The men in the grove, now in the saddle, turned and opened fire on the group by the train, driving them back to shelter. Waffles, taking advantage of the cover afforded, ran towards the grove, ordering his friends to spread out and surround it; but it was too late, for at

that minute galloping was heard and it grew rapidly fainter.

Curley appeared at the end of the train: "Where's th' rest of th' coyotes?"

"Two of 'em got away," Lefty replied.



The legs' owner fell

"Ya-ho!" shouted Tex from the grove. "Don't none of you fools shoot! I'm coming out. They plumb got away!"

"They near got you, Curley," Waffles cried.

"Nears don't count," Curley laughed.

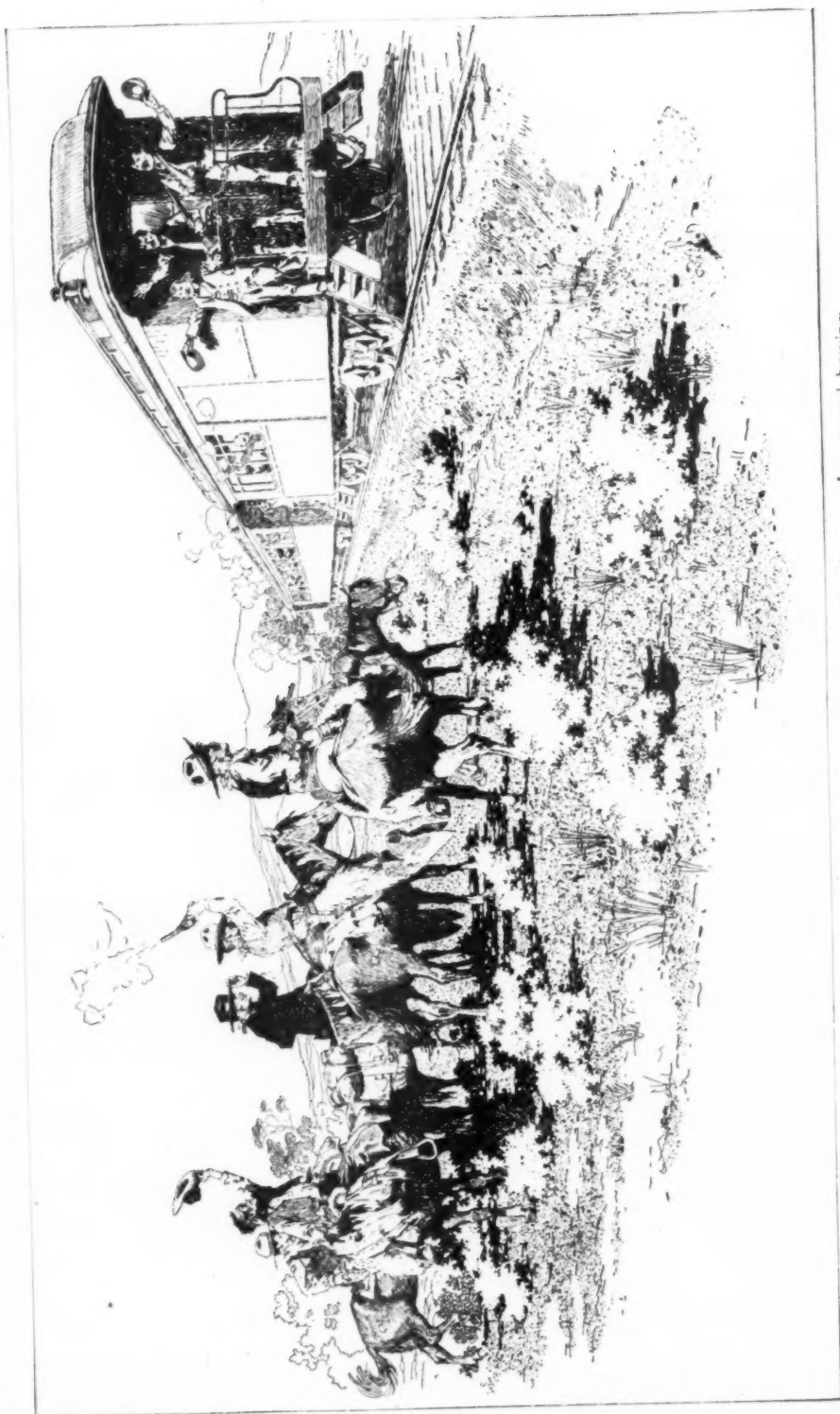
"Did you ever notice Tex when he's fighting mad?" asked Lanky, grinning at the man who was leaving the woods. "He allus wears his *sombrero* hanging on one ear. Look!"

"Who touched off that cannon some time back?" asked Salvation.

"I did. It was a anti-gravity cartridge what I found sizzling on a rod under th' floor of th' express car," replied Curley.

"Why didn't you pinch out th' fuse 'stead of blowing everything up, you half-breed?" Lefty asked.

"I reckon I was some hasty," grinned Curley.



Tex and the others had mounted and were busy waving their *sombreros* and bowing

"It blowed me under th' car an' my lid through a windy," cried Salvation. "An' Waffles, he went up in th' air like a shore-'nough grasshopper."

Tex joined them, grinning broadly: "Hey, reckon ridin' in th' cars aint so bad after all, is it?"

"Holy smoke!" cried the foreman. "what's that a popping?"

Tex, Colt in hand leaped to the side of the train and looked along it, the others close behind him, and saw the fat man with his head and arm out of the window, blazing away into the air, which increased the panic in the coaches. Tex grinned and fired into the ground, and the fat man nearly dislocated parts of his anatomy by his hasty disappearance.

"Reckon he plumb forgot all about his fine, six-dollar gun till just now," Waffles laughed.

"Oh, he's making good," Curley replied. "He said he'd take a hand if anything busted loose. It's a good thing he didn't come to life while me an' Tex was under his windy looking for laigs."

"Reckon some of us better go in th' cars an' quiet th' stampede," the foreman remarked, mounting the steps, followed by Tex. "They're shore loco."

The uproar in the coach ceased abruptly when the two punchers stepped through the door, the inmates shrinking into their seats, frightened into silence. Waffles and his companion did not make a reassuring sight, for they were grimy with burned powder and dust, and Tex's sleeve was stained with Curley's blood.

"Oh my jewels, my pretty jewels!" sobbed a woman, staring at Waffles and wringing her hands.

"Ma'am, we shore don't want yore jewelry," replied the foreman, earnestly. "Ca'm yoreself; we don't want nothin'."

"I don't want that!" growled Tex, pushing a wallet from him. "How many times do you want us to tell you we don't want nothin'? We aint robbers; we licked th' robbers."

Suddenly he stooped and, grasping a pair of legs which protruded into the aisle obstructing the passage, straightened up and backed towards Curley, who had just entered the car, dragging into sight a portly gentleman, who kicked

and struggled and squealed, as he grabbed at the stanchions of seats to stay his progress. Curley stepped aside between two seats and let his friend pass, and then leaned over and grasped the portly gentleman's coat-collar. He tugged energetically and lifted the frightened man clear of the aisle and deposited him across the back of a seat, face down, where he hung balanced, yelling and kicking.

"Shut yore face, you cave-hunter!" cried Curley in disgust. "Stop that infernal noise! You fat fellers make all yore noise after th' fight is over!"

The man on the seat, suddenly realizing what a sight he made, rolled off his perch and sat up, now more angry than frightened. He glared at Curley's grinning face and sputtered:

"It's an outrage! It's an outrage! I'll have you hung for this day's work, young man!"

"That's right," grinned Tex. "He shore deserves it. I told him more'n once that he'd get strung up some day."

"Yes, and you, too!"

"Please don't," begged Tex. "I don't want t' die!"

Tense as the past quarter of an hour had been a titter ran along the car and, fuming impotently, the portly gentleman fled into the smoker.

"I'll bet he had a six-dollar gun, too," laughed Curley.

"I'll bet he's calling hisself names right about now," Tex replied. Then he turned to reply to a woman: "Yes, ma'am, we did. But they wasn't real bad-men."

At this a young woman, who was about as pretty as any young woman could be, arose and ran to Tex and, impulsively throwing her arms around his neck, cried: "You brave man! You hero! You dear!"

"Waffles! Curley! Help!" cried the frightened and embarrassed puncher, struggling to get free.

She kissed him on the cheek, which flamed even more red as he made frantic efforts to keep his head back.

"Ma'am!" he cried, desperately. "Leggo, ma'am! Leggo!"

"Oh! Ho! Ho!" roared Curley, weak

from his mirth and, not looking to see what he was doing, he dropped into a seat beside another woman. He was on his feet instantly; fearing that he would have to go through the ordeal his friend was going through, he fled down the aisle, closely followed by Tex, who by this time had managed to break away. Waffles backed off suspiciously and kept close watch on Tex's admirer.

Just then the brakeman entered the car, grinning, and the foreman asked about the condition of the conductor.

"Oh, he's all right now," the brakeman replied. "They shot him through the shoulder, but he's repaired and out bossin' the job of clearin' the rocks off the track. He's a little shaky yet, but he'll come around all right."

"That's good. I'm shore glad to hear it."

"Wont you wear this pin as a small token of my gratitude?" asked a voice at Waffles' shoulder.

He wheeled and raised his *sombrero*, a flush stealing over his face:

"Thank you, ma'am, but I don't want no pay. We was plumb glad to do it."

"But this is not pay! It's just a trifling token of my appreciation of your courage, just something to remind you of it. I shall feel hurt if you refuse."

Her quick fingers had pinned it to his shirt while she spoke and he thanked her as well as his embarrassment would permit. Then there was a rush towards him and, having visions of a shirt looking like a jeweler's window, he turned and fled from the car, crying: "Pin 'em on th' brakeman!"

He found the outfit working at a pile of rocks on the track, under the supervision of the conductor, and Tex looked up apprehensively at the foreman's approach.

"Lord!" he ejaculated, grinning sheepishly, "I was some scairt you was a woman."

Curley dropped the rock he was carrying and laughed derisively.

"Oh, yore a brave man, you are! scared to death by a purty female girl! If I'd 'a' been you I wouldn't 'a' run, not a step!"

Tex looked at him witheringly: "Oh,

no! You wouldn't 'a' run! You'd dropped dead in your tracks, you would!"

"You was both of you a whole lot scared," Waffles laughed. Then, turning to the conductor: "How do you feel, Simms?"

"Oh, I'm all right: but it took the starch out of me for awhile."

"Well, I don't wonder, not a bit."

"You fellows certainly don't waste any time getting busy," Simms laughed.

"That's the secret of gun-fightin'," replied the foreman.

"Well, you're a fine crowd all right. Any time you want to go any place when you're broke, climb aboard my train and I'll see't you get there."

"Much obliged."

Simms turned to the express-car: "Hey, Jackson! You can open up now if you want to."

But the express-messenger was suspicious, fearing that the conductor was talking with a gun at his head: "You go to!" he called back.

"Honest!" laughed Simms. "Some cowboy friends o' mine licked the gang. Didn't you hear that dynamite go off? If they hadn't fished it out from under your feet you'd be communing with the angels 'bout now."

For a moment there was no response, and then Jackson could be heard dragging things away from the door. When he was told of the cartridge and Curley had been pointed out to him as the man who had saved his life, he leaped to the ground and ran to where that puncher was engaged in carrying the ever-silenced robbers to the baggage-car. He shook hands with Curley, who laughed deprecatingly, and then turned and assisted him.

Tex came up and grinned: "Say, there's some cayuses in that grove up th' track; shall I go up an' get 'em?"

"Shore! I'll go with you," replied the foreman.

In the grove they found seven horses picketed, two of them being pack-animals.

They led the horses forth and reached the train as the others came up.

"Well, here's five saddled cayuses, an' two others," the foreman grinned.

"Then we can ride th' rest of th' way in th' saddle instead of in that blamed train," Curley eagerly suggested.

"That's just what we can do," replied the foreman. "Leather beats car-seats any time. How far are we from Conway, Simms?"

"About twenty miles."

"An' we can ride along th' track, too," suggested Tex.

which were decorating the car-windows.

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor, and cheers and good wishes rang out and were replied to by bows and waving of *sombreros*. Then Tex jerked his gun loose and emptied it into the air, his companions doing likewise. Suddenly five reports rang out from the smoker and they cheered the fat man as he waved at them. They sat quietly and watched



The fat man blazing away into the air

"We shore can," laughed Waffles, shaking hands with the train-crew: "We're some glad we rode with you this trip: we've had a fine time."

"And we're glad you did," Simms replied, "for that aint no joke, neither."

Tex and the others had mounted and were busy waving their *sombreros* and bowing to the heads and handkerchiefs

the train until the last handkerchief became lost to sight around a curve, but the screeching whistle could be heard for a long time.

"Gee!" laughed Tex as they rode on after the train, "wont th' fellers home on th' ranch be a whole lot sore when they hears about the good time what they missed!"

Service

BY RICHARD WASHBURN CHILD

Author of "A Kink in the System," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GAYLE PORTER HOSKINS

OVER the City of Washington the sluggish Potomac had thrown its scarf of damp Winter mist; dusk added but little to the muddiness of the day. From his office-window high up in the department-building, with its musty odors and eternal foot-beats of government clerks, the chief of the Bureau of Water Sheds and Forest Drainage raised his head from a contemplation of a brown and yellow contour-map, saw the dull stare of lights in other office-buildings, and realized that another day was done. Almost at the same moment the ground glass door opened and, framed in gloom, a little man stood there.

"Well," said this stumpy individual, "are you glad to see me, friend Wallace?" He had a brisk, untrammelled voice; he spoke as if he were glad that his words were heard by everyone within ordinary hearing and a few others beside.

Wallace rose to the height of his big frame, reached forth his large, impressive, muscular hand and for a moment silently inspected this supposed stranger of windy manners, blithe spirit, little body, prosperous smile and many layers of upholstered clothing.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the newcomer sizably. "Well, I'll tell you. I'm Harry Fanshawe."

"Come into the light," cried Wallace, turning the button. "I'm heartily glad to see you. It has been at least—"

"Just twenty-two years since we graduated," the other interrupted. He smiled as if his ready answer gave him some superiority over his old acquaintance. The desk-chair received him. He rubbed his knees like a man well pleased. "Well, Wallace," said he, "I had not been here long before I found out you were here,

and I came up. Yes, sir, I came up to see you."

"You are passing through?"

"How's that?"

"Business?"

"Why no!" cried Fanshawe. "That shows what fame is. I'm a congressman! You didn't know it? Well, well, I declare! Yes, sir. I made my way and saved my pile, and I thought I'd like the honor of the thing—the 'honorable' before my name." He made a pretense of writing it with his finger-nail on the gray blotter.

Wallace watched him with some embarrassment. "Perhaps I ought to have known it," said he suddenly. "But the work here is rather confining in a way. You can do as much as you like for the U. S. or only a little. I am kept busy, however, and after a long term of government-service I have gotten rusty on who is who 'up on the hill.' The only congressmen I know are those I see about my recommendations for legislation and—Well, there are not many of them I'd take home to dinner." He paused with some embarrassment.

The other laughed with good cheer. "Yes, yes, I understand perfectly. I'm beginning to understand, now that I'm here in Washington."

"So, congressmen, as such, seem to me merely disagreeable individuals that I have to beg to do the decent thing by whatever work we have planned and think best to put through." Wallace smiled. "You are Harry Fanshawe, of course." He leaned against the wall as if a little weary. "The 'honorable' wont prejudice me against you. I'm mighty glad to see you. Of course I have heard, just heard—"

"It's nothing," exclaimed his old friend, waving his hand. "It's nothing.



"I feel pride in the word 'service'"

Of course, I've been successful. Just between ourselves, I never was much fitted for technical training. I wasn't near so good a civil engineer—not in your class. But I made money at it in the West, out in my State, very good money. And when it came to developing water-powers, I saw that it was the promoters who held the money-basket. Yes, sir, the big money is in that. Successful? Well, yes, of course. It's nothing."

Wallace gazed back at the man who sat in the desk-chair swinging his short and active legs: he knew very well that this old friend had grown rich, that he had acquired a fortune. Somehow all the men of ability who had kept clear of the government-service had done very well. One heard from time to time of their progress, of their handsome salaries; the particular school at which he and they had trained had given them a thorough preparation for success. He knew what nearly all of them had accomplished.

"Let me ask, old man," said Fanshawe, after a moment, "How long have you been in this work—working for Uncle Sam?"

"Ever since I was married."

"What a fool!" ejaculated the other. "Why, my dear fellow, you have more ability at the technical side of things than any of the old boys. You are an authority on the equalization of torrent flow. What a complete, sandpapered and varnished fool!"

"I know it," replied Wallace.

"And nobody gives a rap about a man who doesn't make money," Fanshawe whispered, in the manner of one who confides commonplace information. "Of course, we hear your name, and we know well enough that the work you have originated and are putting through is big stuff and all that. But you're out of it. We look in the Volume of Estimates to see what you are getting. Pfest! Well! I should say!"

"I know," said Wallace bitterly. "It's nearly twenty-five hundred dollars a year. Of course, I know what I'm getting."

Fanshawe thrust back his overcoat to insert both hands in his trousers-pockets; he jingled his keys, coins, and other

trinkets. "Then why on earth, old man, have you kept on?"

"I don't quite know myself," the chief of the Water Sheds and Forest Drainage replied solemnly. "I can't answer that, to save my life."

The congressman narrowed his eyelids; he stroked his face, he pressed the neatly clipped coarse hair which grew on his upper lip. Wallace noticed how much the other man had coarsened in twenty years. But the motions and appearance of a successful American showed on Fanshawe this moment as if he had been made up to play the part upon a stage. Now he was squinting again as he layed both closed fists upon the desk's edge.

"My friend," he said, "I am here to tell you that you can get three times that money outside."

"Of course," said Wallace. "The Ent-whistle Power Corporation has offered me more than that—much more."

"They have?" Fanshawe said. "Why didn't you go with 'em?"

"Oh, I hardly know," replied the engineer. "It went by. There have been several others. They went by."

The congressman changed his expression to one of real concern.

"Wallace, my boy," he said, "it's a mighty serious thing to throw yourself away. It's a mighty serious thing to drop out of the game. It's confoundedly serious to get to be your age and a little older, too, on less money than you will want to have. Uncle Sam is buying all your efforts, all your life, for twenty-five hundred a year. That's the price—the cheap, bargain-day, confidence-game price that he pays to two or three hundred able men in the departments. They could get more money outside. But they're suckers—they are easy. They stay on." Fanshawe bit at the end of a cigar and rolled it, with a deft tongue into the other corner of his mouth. "What do I care about 'em? If I went around doing nothing but helping suckers, where would I be? I look after me—myself." He smiled. "But you are my old friend, Wallace." There was a glister in his eyes. "And I'm here to do what I can to help you—to wake up!"

Wallace laughed. His overcoat hung on a hook fastened into the woodwork; he reached for it.

"Fanshawe," said he, "we don't live very well, but—come home to dinner with me." Some of his youth came back into the voice. "Take pot-luck with us. Come on."

The new congressman thought a moment, as if he were debating whether or not, having the appetite of an affluent bachelor, he should risk an excursion into the household of a married person with meager salary.

"I'll be delighted," he said suddenly and kindly—as if there had been no hesitation. "I want to talk to you."

He looked around the office with its somber walls, pictures of irrigation projects, and colored prints furnished by railroad and steamship companies in weathered oak frames; he glanced at the threadbare red carpet and at the file cabinet with a corner of a blue print protruding from the upper drawer.

"This is a dingy old building, eh?" he remarked, starting toward the door. "And the elevator squeaks. It would grate on me all right—that out-of-date, old, elevator."

"It grates on me occasionally," said Wallace, long afterwards, as they stepped out of the building into the fog.

"What?" said Fanshawe, who now was endeavoring to follow the other's long legged stride.

"The elevator."

"Oh, the old elevator?—sure!" The congressman, used to the dry air of his Western State, turned up the collar of his overcoat. For a time, as the two traveled the busier avenue with its blurred lights and its postoffice clock, which was vainly endeavoring to transmit the time of day through the mist, as far as the Treasury Building, Fanshawe puffed his breath into the damp air and occasionally looked up toward the man beside him. He wondered, perhaps, what manner of enslavement kept this other, with all his learning, skill, and originality, in an overcoat which showed wear at the sleeves. When they approached street corners he could see the shiny places at elbows and cuffs.

"Huh," he said finally. "You certainly are a fool. You can't go any higher here in Washington. As far as your particular function and place in the service goes you're at the top. And what is the top? I repeat—why don't you get out?"

"I will," replied Wallace. "Some day, of course, I will. I suppose I ought to do it now."

Fanshawe sniffed.

"When I came here," the engineer explained, "it was just for experience—a part of my training. Then I developed this interest in the relation of the forests to water-power and industry. I want to see these plans of mine put through."

"And," added Fanshawe, "you'll wonder when you've finished why the newspapers will give all the credit to some politician with a breath that smells of cloves, and forget to mention your name at all."

Wallace laughed. "How did you know that?" he inquired ironically. "I found it out twelve years ago. But you've only been in Washington for a month or two."

He increased the rapidity of his stride.

"Oh, it will happen in your case, anyway," said Fanshawe, disregarding the sarcasm of the other man. "You are not the noisy kind. Quiet and good-natured. What does your wife say to this? I've never seen her. I remember getting cards to your blow-out. What does *she* say?"

"Oh, she?" said Wallace, unoffended. "Oh, she is satisfied."

"Ha!" Fanshawe exclaimed, as if to indicate that his friend now exposed the secret. He glanced up at the Capitol Building which they were now passing. Its stateliness loomed up darkly.

"Magnificent building," said the congressman. "They could hardly do better to-day, I suppose. Well, well. Don't be satisfied, Wallace. It's better never to be satisfied. Now, to be a little more concrete—Is this where you live? An apartment, eh?"

"Yes, confound it—an apartment," said Wallace with his key in the varnished door. "I don't think a real whole man could live in an apartment."

"Pooh—pooh!" Fanshawe puffed on the stairs. "Ever see those in New York?"



"It seems to me as if the soul of my country was in that dome"

Cost seven or eight thousand a year. Magnificent. Simply palatial."

The host looked a bit discomfited, but he met his wife at the door with a cheery smile, and he introduced Fanshawe to her, and to his little make believe home, with no outward show of embarrassment.

The congressman was one of a class of men who regard women as rather unimportant except as to their capacity for making trouble. He thought any woman was very passable who had the negative virtues. Mrs. Wallace seemed to him to be one of those numerous young wives who bravely endeavor to do their own housework, have such children as come to them, and still keep themselves as young as possible in appearance, as gay as possible in spirit. He could see that she was not extraordinarily endowed with physical attractions; she was too short, too freckled; her lips were too thin; she looked too tired. All the commonplace-ness of a wife and a mother had attached itself to her. She was the average married woman—the average American woman who has a husband and children. She carried the last born in the crook of her tired arm, into which it seemed to fit as if her arm had been made for it. Fanshawe had a vague impression of other children about. He thought he saw Wallace greet one of them—a little boy—and perhaps others, just before they all sat down to dinner.

Mrs. Wallace was bringing the things in from the kitchen herself. She managed matters well in such a small, stuffy little place and wore a very clean white apron which reminded him of his own mother.

"My, my, it's a great treat to get a home dinner," he exclaimed generously, but he covertly drew a wry face as he noticed that the first course of the meal consisted of the roast and the vegetable.

All in all, Fanshawe was glad when the dinner was over. He knew very little of topics of conversation with which one could interest the average American housewife. Politics, dam-projects, and investments would hardly do, and as usual in the presence of women he questioned his own sense of humor and was obliged to proceed cautiously. What he had said on one or two occasions when dining out

in New York had not been received enthusiastically. Therefore, he now kept along the way of the ordinary question and answer form of conversation and let his self-assertiveness exhibit itself only in the size of his voice. The cramped little dining-room was filled by it and it rang on the vestiges of cut-glass wedding presents which were displayed on the embroidered cloth of the sideboard. There was something of a relief when Wallace, who had been serious and thoughtful during the meal, suggested that they go together into the sitting-room to smoke.

"I have a real cigar here," explained the chief of Water Shed and Forest Drainage, fumbling in a box full. By his remark one might have supposed that the rest were only imitations. He offered it to Fanshawe with a kindly beam in his eyes. "I've been keeping it for just such an occasion, Harry." Fanshawe rolled the weed in his stocky fingers. It crackled dryly. "Great Heavens!" he thought, "he hasn't smoked it himself. He's been economizing his hospitality. He's been saving it up for somebody to entertain with it!"

He put the cigar in his mouth, allowed Wallace to reach forward a lighted match, puffed out the smoke, and glanced about.

The room made pretense of being what is called a parlor; it endeavored to be as comfortable as a living-room; it did not quite succeed in either. The congressman thought the impossible had been bravely attempted by Mrs. Wallace. The chamber seemed to him brave and pathetic—more brave and pathetic than it was, in truth. He had a touch of emotion. Poor old Wallace! Wallace indeed needed awakening. He needed relief, and Fanshawe was here to offer it to him because, though he had not seen his friend for twenty years, he had reached a stage in life when he had counted his real friends and found them few. He had thought of Wallace as an addition to the list of three. It had given him joy. Wallace, by George, would be a friend always. Wallace was that kind.

"I said when we were coming up the steps that I wanted to be a little more concrete," said Fanshawe, letting his words step on the heels of his thoughts.

"And frank, too, but I did not hunt you out because I wanted to tell you that you are throwing yourself away."

The congressman paused as if to see what the other had to say to this.

"I understand," returned Wallace. He indicated by a motion of his large, muscular hands that Fanshawe might say what he liked.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the latter quickly, "look at this! Look where you live. Wallace, my good fellow, you're growing old poor, and what have you to show for it? A wife and three babies and four hundred dollars' worth of furniture. That's what government-service has done for you. Pooh! I'm the kind of man that talks straight out, and let me tell you what spells success for us fellers to-day—dollars!" He was interrupted by a violent fit of coughing. "What we want is money and a house that people will look at—a rip-snorting house! They'll say, 'Wallace lives there.' Will they say, 'Wallace is a good fellow' or 'Wallace is an authority on torrents who is connected with the Department of Commerce and the Interior?' No, sir! They'll say, 'Wallace—very successful—he's made money!' That's what they'll say. They'll say you've got two motor cars and your daughter had a what-you-may-call-'em—a coming out this winter—swell business!" He pounded his chair-arm softly and dropped his voice to a whisper like a stump-speaker about to create an impression. "Dollars! dollars! dollars!" said he.

Wallace pretended that he was not much affected by this philosophy. He stared at what might have been an open fireplace had it not been a space covered with conventional green cartridge-paper beneath the machine-made mantelpiece. And yet at last he nodded solemnly.

"You know it's true!" exclaimed Fanshawe explosively, "and I'm a man of plain words. Nothing ought to keep you back. No, sir." He hesitated a moment for the purpose of showing hesitation. Then he fired at what he supposed was the bull's eye. "Not even your wife," he said.

Wallace looked up quickly. He wore an expression which the congressman

could not interpret, but, fearing to be misunderstood, the latter enlarged his meaning. "Women don't know what a man's game is," he explained. "Your wife don't know how important it is for you to get out now—it's late enough already—and hustle—play the big game!"

"Oh, she would like the dollars," replied Wallace standing up. The corners of his large mouth fell a little. "She works too hard," he said, as if meditating aloud. "I ought to fix it so's I could give her more—so's there'd be a relief."

"Exactly," said Fanshawe nasally. "Exactly! And here is what I had to say to you. You know me. I'm at the top in my part of the country. I have a controlling interest at the present day in the Myodale Improvement Company and I've developed in my state in the last ten years water horse-power that aggregate—Why, what's the use of talking. Come with me, Wallace, I can use you this minute. I'm here in congress—you see. I'll give you three times what you are getting now. Why? Because I like you? No, sir! Because you are worth it!" He leaned back in his chair, regarding the other with a wide stare as if to say, "There you have the whole matter."

"I wanted to finish this work here that I've begun," said Wallace looking at the floor. "It's going to be tremendously important to the country. I—"

"That's it!" exclaimed Fanshawe viciously. "There's the word—I! me! myself! Think of that! Where do you come in? But thunder! if you're going to—"

"Wait!" interrupted Wallace squaring his jaw, "I was going to say that in spite of all the reasons—such as they are—that might keep me here, this time—" He looked up.

His wife stood in the doorway.

"I've put the children to bed," said she, "and now I can sit down a moment."

The congressman arose awkwardly.

"I just couldn't help catching scraps of your talk," she went on, seating herself on the edge of the chair in the manner of one who must soon get up again. She looked toward her husband anxiously; then toward their guest. "You seemed to be discussing how poorly paid the gov-

ernment service is, but you won't urge my husband to leave it, Mr. Fanshawe?"

For the first time the congressman found himself looking squarely into her steady brown eyes; he was shrewd enough to meet the situation broadside. "That is just what I've been doing," said he with a sharp laugh.

Mrs. Wallace laughed, too. "And that is why I came in," she said easily. "I have heard very nearly all that has been said. I couldn't help it." She brushed a lock of hair from her forehead. "I don't want to have my husband make a change now. I think it is his duty to stay here. Perhaps you think I should not hasten to say this, now. Perhaps you will not like me for it?"

"Oh, my, no," stammered Fanshawe.

He was sharp enough to see, having met her in contest, that he had made a mistake in her importance. She was a partner; she spoke with the confidence of a partner. The Westerner at once assumed the position of talking to both members of the firm.

"Mrs. Wallace," he said, "an opportunity is an opportunity. If you have heard what I said to your husband—my old friend—you will know what I think about his opportunities here in Washington." He leaned forward toward her.

"We have often talked of them," said Wallace, addressing his wife with a note of affection in his voice.

"Often," said she. "I know that there is not any chance of advancement. We are not in politics." She smiled. "And he gets so little that we cannot save anything—scarcely anything."

"And there is no particular honor—that is, no reward of that kind?" Fanshawe added interrogatively.

"Perhaps not," admitted the wife cheerfully.

"In another place outside—such as I offer, Mrs. Wallace—you could be independent, if I may say so. And even if the material things—or whatever you call 'em—the things that you can buy with money, don't appeal to you, then there's this—the children. I suppose you'd want the children to have them." Fanshawe imagined that he had touched a sensitive spot.

"Oh, I like them myself," said Mrs. Wallace. "I like them and want them as much as the average woman. I think they are very tempting."

"Oh, you deserve them," said the congressman sincerely, though he used the insincere diction of a man who is used to insincerity. "You deserve them now—when youth is still with you. You must not be tired out at the beginning."

He noticed again how weary were her eyes, how listless, except in moments of tension, were her hands; he knew he had told the truth.

"At the beginning?" repeated Mrs. Wallace vexingly. "I cannot thank you enough. You truly make me feel as if it were so."

"Well, then," suggested the congressman, tenaciously holding to his argument, "what can hold Wallace here? Not money? Not honors, not lack of ability, not any promise, not any contract? Then what?"

"It's very hard to say in a few words," the woman answered quietly, "but if I had to say it briefly I should just say—'service.'"

"Service?" exclaimed the congressman. "Service?"

"Yes, that is it," she repeated, "service. Don't you think there is something fine in the word? Why! When I tell people that my husband is in the government service I feel real pride—pride in the word 'service' and pride in the word 'government.'" Even as she said it she raised her head. "But 'service' I think is the finest."

Wallace looked quickly from his wife to Fanshawe. The latter moved his chin a little forward over his collar with a puzzled expression, waiting for her to say more.

"Possibly I might not feel so satisfied about it," the woman went on, "if my husband didn't have so big a work before him. It is all his own, in a way. He thought it up. He originated it. We like to think of that. And I look forward to seeing him finish it. I can't tell you how much I look forward to the time when it will be done. I suppose he explained to you how important it will be to the country—how it will benefit so many in-



Beside the crib sat the mother

dustries, and how it will in the end mean factories and towns and new villages where there weren't any before, with people going home to their suppers in houses with lights in 'the windows—all new!"

Fanshawe nodded gravely, fingering his watch-chain.

"I like to dream about it like that," said Mrs. Wallace. She had a soft, pleasing voice. "And then besides, I'm sure that there is much satisfaction in 'service.' I like to think"—she turned toward her husband—"that he is serving the United States. I'm sure it will be pleasant for our boys to know about it." She paused. The two men were looking at her intently. She arose with a quiet, contented smile curving her lips.

"Perhaps we cannot leave them much

money," she said suddenly. "But I can tell them that their father served here cheerfully and without hope of reward." Her voice trembled a little. "I shall tell them that he served the United States."

Her husband looked down at the machine-made mantelpiece and drew his finger along the pressed wood ornaments. Fanshawe examined his cuff-links.

"It is much better," added his wife, "for us to live modestly and have what we have now—so complete a happiness and so comfortable a feeling. I do my own work here, as you see. But even when I am tired I am glad that we have not taken up any of the offers that we have had. The service is much finer. Don't you see that there is magic in the word 'service,' Mr. Fanshawe? Isn't

there magic in the sound of the words, "The United States?"

"You bet!" exclaimed the congressman. "You bet there is!"

The woman walked quickly to the bay window and raised the curtain. The mist had gone. Into the blue-black dome of heaven the dome of the Capitol raised its head toward the stars.

"Will you stand here, Mr. Fanshawe?" she said in a clearer voice.

The congressman came and gazed over her shoulder.

"I think that is a wonderful thing to look upon," she continued. "I see it all the time—many times a day and yet it always affects me the same way. Why, Mr. Fanshawe, it seems to me as if the soul of my country was in that dome!"

"Well, that's so," the congressman said.

Mrs. Wallace turned away but he still stood there looking out at the dome with the starlit sky behind.

"Service," said he softly to himself.

But when he looked back into the room with a word on his lips for Mrs. Wallace she had gone. The faint crying of an infant coming from somewhere down the narrow apartment-hall gradually lapsed into the back-and-forth sound of a rocking-chair. The two noises suggested that the eternal duties of a mother had called her. Fanshawe coughed and Wallace looked up.

"Where are the matches?" asked the guest, plucking the ragged edges of his cigar with his thumb and forefinger. He lit the stump with his head thrown back so that the flame should not burn the tip of his nose. Once he drew in his breath as if he were about to speak, but he exhaled it again with an audible sigh. The sound of the rocking-chair had ceased. The chief of the Bureau of Water Sheds and Forest Drainage watched the congressman narrowly.

"Well," said the latter finally. "I've had a good evening, Wallace. I must go. Let me tell you, old Wallace, I've had a

good evening. A feller gets new points of view, don't he?" And then as if embarrassed he looked quickly about him for his hat and overcoat. "No, I must go," he repeated starting down the corridor.

At one of the open doorways of the hall Fanshawe stopped. "Look!" he whispered to Wallace.

Within the room, though the light was turned low, they could see a child's bed with one small head ark upon the pillow. Beside this crib, where one corner of the coverlet had been turned down sat the mother, the youngest baby in her arms. Both of them were motionless and silent in sound sleep.

"That's a pretty picture, Wallace," said Fanshawe tenderly. "She must have been tired, eh?—very tired."

"I'll wake her," said the husband laughing. "She'll want to say 'good-night' to you."

"No, no, no!" protested the congressman, hurrying toward the rack where hung his coat and hat. "I like them that way," he explained in awkward artistic appreciation. Then suddenly he recovered his wonted manner.

"Oh, about that matter," he began briskly, "Why—to thunder with it, Wallace! You're fixed all right. Keep right on. You know me. You know the kind of feller I am. If I can ever help you with anything 'up on the hill,' let me know. Sure thing. I'll see you again soon. I want to come around here again. You're fixed all right—wife, children—the whole outfit. The right stuff. Yes sir, you're all right, Wallace. Good-night, Wallace. Don't get to envying me, old man. I've made my pile, but—hell!"

He shook the other's hand and was gone.

When Wallace went to pull down the curtain in the living-room, where wisps of cigar-smoke still lingered, he saw Fanshawe down on the corner, standing in the circle of light from the street lamp, gazing, and gazing upward—at the dome of the Capitol.



There lay the bottle that I had carelessly dropped

The Pursuit of the Present

BY CHARLES BATTELL LOOMIS

Author of "Cheerful Americans," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY RALEIGH

I

If all came about through Tom Parsons' generosity and my absent mindedness.

Tom Parsons is the most generous fellow I know. He is an artist and artists are apt to be generous by inclination, although unable to gratify their impulses owing to the state of the picture-market;

but Tom has always been generous in spite of the market. When we were at boarding-school together and he had resolved to be the greatest painter that the world ever saw and I was equally determined to put Shakespeare on a back seat, he was the most generous chap in the school and always shared his Christmas-box to such an extent that he had less of its contents than any one else.

I wont say that Tom Parsons ever became the greatest artist that the world ever saw; on the other hand, to be quite candid, Shakespeare still rests secure for all of me. I sometimes have fits of melancholia, when I think that I am going on thirty and have never set the smallest stream afire.

It was the day before Christmas, and I was feeling downcast as I sat in my little hall bedroom and saw the snow sadly falling. Another year had gone and I had failed to take New York by storm. It was not so much my fault as it was due to the apathy of New York. I had produced a play, but New York's interest in it—likewise the manager's—had ceased after the first three days and the theatre had remained closed the last three days—which was depressing.

As I sat a prey to unholiday thoughts there was a knock at my door, and upon opening it I found a messenger-boy bearing a letter and a package for me.

I receipted for them and dropped the package carelessly on the bed, not knowing that a small fortune in glass lay therein, and opened the letter, which was from Tom Parsons.

DEAR JACK,

Sorry that the play did not go. Better luck next time and a Merry Christmas to you.

As I am in a hurry I will get to the meat of my matter at once.

You must remember my speaking of Giacomo Rubino, with whom I studied art in Paris. Well, he has just sent me a curious Christmas present. Although Rubino was poor when a student, his father left him his wine-cellar. In the old days "Zhack" and I used to do a little carousing together on *vin ordinaire*, but he always said that when it was possible he would send me some of the famous "Villa Madrico" vintage of 1743, and then I would know what wine really was.

Now, as you know, I have lately entered upon a career on the water-wagon, and so to-day, when I received a snugly packed little case containing a bottle of the precious vintage, I sat down and wrote "Zhack" that I accepted his gift with thanks and was going to share it with a dear friend.

Hold on! I know that you also are on the water-wagon, so I think that, under the circumstances of the New York public not knowing a masterpiece when it sees one on the stage,

you will be justified in selling my present.

Better take it to those wholesale grocers on Broadway near Madison Square.

Don't hesitate to do this. I can't drink it and I can't sell a gift, but I give it to you in order that you may recoup yourself for the poor taste of the theatre-going public. It's easily worth \$200. Not but that you expected more in royalties, but after all, \$200 is \$200.

Try another manager with another play, and meantime wishing you a Merry Christmas and hoping that you wont break the bottle, I am,

TOM PARSONS.

P. S. Sold my "Gray Day on the Nanticoke Hills" to a Frenchman, yesterday. Think of it! So you see I'm happy even if I am on the water-wagon.

Just like Tom; and I began to have kinder feelings for the playgoing public solely on account of that letter.

I looked at the bed. There lay the bottle that I had carelessly dropped. What if it had hit the iron bedstead? I picked it up tenderly, as if it had been a baby, and then laid it on a pillow and sat down to plan just what to do.

It being Christmas-time I was down to almost my last cent. Christmas always finds me penniless. In that it is strangely like the other holidays of the year—also the days in between. My money is always mortgaged weeks ahead, and I never have even five dollars to spend foolishly.

Now, although I don't know very much about the value of wines, I was quite sure that a vintage over 170 years old would have a commercial value far above its intrinsic worth, and \$200 seemed cheap to me.

The snow was falling merrily—some of the same snow that had fallen so sadly a half hour since—and I put on my overcoat and then set the bottle in a side pocket of it and started for Packer, Ferrall & Conduit's.

As I joined the merry throng in the streets and walked gingerly along on account of the bottle, my thoughts were divided between warm feelings for Tom and guesses as to what I would get for the wine.

The pavements were slippery in places, and I was now and then seized with a

panic of fear lest I fall with my precious burden and be-wine the streets with a costly flood, but I arrived at the store without accident and was soon closeted with a member of the firm, to whom I told my story and showed the bottle, after unwrapping it carefully.

Some of my guesses as to the value of the wine had been wild—one of them

strange idea came into my head that if he offered \$600 so readily, perhaps one of his rivals would offer yet more. That demon cupidity, who on Christmas Eve should have been in the nethermost depths, was sitting up and taking notice and had seized on me.

When Mr. Conduit returned, I told him as calmly as I could that I would



Tiptoeed as if walking on eggs

being as high as three hundred dollars a bottle; but when I asked Mr. Conduit what he would give for it, he answered promptly and without any evidence of feeling, \$600.

At the same moment he was called to the door and I had time to collect myself.

Did I decide to close with him at once?

I grieve to say that I did not. Some

think it over, and he called in a boy, who wrapped the bottle up and handed it to me, and I walked out of the store and tiptoed along for a block as if walking on eggs, so fearful was I of falling, and then I entered a shoe-store and bought a pair of rubbers, paying for them with my last bill.

Encased in friction producing soles, I

walked fearlessly along, and soon entered a wine importing store intent on getting a fifty dollar raise of the price.

There were a number of men in the store buying wine against the holiday, and filled with day dreams, I absent-mindedly set my bottle down on the counter—very gently—but that was subconscious—and walked over to the other side of the store where a lithograph had attracted my notice.

When in front of it I lapsed into a deeper brown-study, for the picture represented the very vintner's from which my bottle had originally come, Villa Madrico, at Lachino, Italy. I noticed that it had been founded five hundred years before, and that they advertised wine three hundred years old. I wondered whether it was a case of poor salesmen or sentimental reluctance to part with such age-old drops of grape.

"Well, sir, what can I do for you?" said a voice.

I turned and hurried panic-stricken over to my bottle.

"I would like to see the head of the firm," said I, grasping my abandoned bottle and I dare say pressing it to my bosom. "I have a bottle of very rare wine that I wish to sell."

"I am the head of the firm," said he. "Where is the bottle?"

I set it down before him.

He picked it up, looked at the wrapping paper in which it was swaddled and smiled.

"That is one of our own wines," said he, and when I shook my head, he unwrapped it and showed me a bottle of table-claret of the most ordinary description.

My blood tingled to the ends of my fingers. I saw at once what had happened. Some one of his customers had picked up my precious bottle by mistake and would regale his miserable family with wine worth at the very least seventy-five dollars a glass, unless I could find him and stop him.

"Who bought this wine?" said I, excitedly. "He has taken mine my mistake."

The wine merchant looked at me as if he suspected some species of bunco but he said, "It was a man with red sidewhisk-

ers and he lives somewhere in this vicinity. He often comes in here to buy wine —"

"Well, he did well," said I. "He got \$700. It was a bottle of 'Villa Madrico,' vintage of 1743!"

It was interesting, even at that distressing moment, to see the excitement of the wine merchant.

"What?" said he. "You had some of that *vintage*? Why, it's worth a thousand dollars a quart. George," said he, calling to a clerk, "do you know where that red whiskered man lives who was in here not three minutes ago?"

"No, sir," said the clerk, promptly, "but he is apt to turn the next corner."

Then I put in: "Thank heaven that red whiskers are out of fashion. He's a marked man. Perhaps he buys his groceries across the way."

"That's so," said the wine-merchant and actually vaulted over his counter. We ran across the street, realizing that speed was necessary, for the misguided man might take it into his head to drink the wine for dinner that night and it was now half past five.

We saw no red whiskered man in the store but opened the door and went in.

"What a fool I was ever to set it down," said I. "He may slip with it and that will be worse than if he drank it. Seven hundred dollars worth of wine frozen to the pavement! Just think of it! Isn't it awful?"

"If that's happened we may be able to trace our man," said the wine-merchant.

"If the wine's gone the man ceases to be interesting," said I.

A clerk approached us.

"Are you in the habit of waiting on a red whiskered man?" said the wine-merchant.

"With a gray derby?"

"Yes," said the wine-merchant excitedly, "that's the man."

"And a gray frock coat?"

"Surely. Lucky he dresses so queerly," said the wine-merchant rubbing his hands as he realized that we had found our man.

"Always carries an umbrella?"

"That's the man. Is he a customer of yours? I want his address."

I breathed more freely. We were on the track of the man and in a few minutes I would have sold my wine to this amiable wine-merchant for at least \$800; and \$200 would be ample profit for him.

But the clerk was a dull witted, exasperating fellow.

"I don't know his address," said he. "I've often noticed him going into your store, and from his clothes I thought he must be daffy."

The wine-merchant uttered an oath of impatience which I seconded with animation.

"Why didn't you tell me at first?" said he.

We hurried to the door.

"I think the man you're after trades at the grocery on the next block," said the proprietor of the store who had overheard us. "I saw him go in there to-night. He had a bottle—"

That was enough. We rushed out of the store and ran the length of the block. Perhaps he was there yet, buying a line of seasonable things.

We threw open the door and rushed in. The store was well patronized but none but smooth-faced men were there. Not a single whisker could be seen on any cheek.

The wine-merchant, as before, took the initiative. "Has a man with gray whiskers, red derby—" he began, and then noticing his slip went on with "Red whiskers, gray derby, gray frock coat, carrying an umbrella and a bottle been in here to-night?" he almost shouted.

"Good evening, Mr. Bretal," said a wideawake clerk. "Mr. Hayden went out of that side door not five minutes ago."

"Hayden. So that's it. Do you know his address?"

"No, but I'll look it up. He trades with us. He lives near here. I think."

"Oh, let's run after him," said I. "We'll waste time looking it up."

"No use running till we know where to run," said Mr. Bretal and there was wisdom in his remark.

I sat down limp on a stool while the clerk, in an exasperatingly lazy manner, went to the rear of the store and asked the bookkeeper for the address of the red whiskered man.

The bookkeeper took up a spick and span ledger and ran his fingers through the index.

"It's in the old book," said he. "I haven't finished entering the addresses in this book yet."

The other book was in the safe and it seemed ages before he got it out and found the address.

"Thank goodness," said I, when we learned where the man with the valuable wine lived.

And then the proprietor of the store said, "I hope he is not wanted for anything serious."

"Only a little mistake," said Mr. Bretal as we left the store. "A thousand times obliged for the accommodation."

I was in too much of a hurry to be polite, but then I had more at stake than Bretal. One can bear a penniless Christmas, particularly if he has acquired the habit, but few men are philosophical enough to see eight or nine hundred dollars slip through their fingers without an emotion of any kind.

The maid came to the door of the house indicated by the bookkeeper.

"Is Mr. Hayden in?"

"Oh, not at all. He always spends Christmas with his daughter in Waterbury."

"Has he been in to-night?"

"He went away, not five minutes ago."

"Did he have a bottle?"

"I can't rightly say. It looked like one."

"And all in gray and with an umbrella?"

"Oh, he always does be dressed like that," said she. "Have you bad news of him? Is he sick?"

"We hope not. You think he's gone for the train?"

"Oh, yes, for the six o'clock train."

Mr. Bretal looked at his watch. It was twelve minutes to six.

"Subway?" said he, and thanking the girl, he ran down the steps and we hurried to the Eighteenth Street Station.

"Too bad we didn't bring his bottle along," said the amiable Mr. Bretal. "He'll hate to give up the one he took."

"Oh, I'll give him money to get something in Waterbury. By the way," said I,

remembering the state of my pocket and fearing the need to board the train which could not be done without a ticket. "Can you let me have five dollars?"

Mr. Bretal could evidently read character, for he let me have the money immediately.

Our passage through the Subway was as swift as it was noisy, and in a short time we were hurrying into the Grand Central, keeping our eyes open for Mr. Hayden.

The clock in the waiting-room pointed to two minutes of six as I bought a ticket to Waterbury and warmly shook the hand of Mr. Bretal who had been so friendly.

"You'll take the wine when I get it, will you not?"

"Surely. Wine like that does not grow on every bush."

"Good wine needs no bush," said I, gayly, and I shot through the door and

out to the gate, and as I passed through it closed behind me.

II

I hurried down the platform and boarded the last car and there in the last seat but one was the man in the gray frock coat. He was reading a newspaper, his hat in the rack above him, and his whiskers catching the light of the gas-lamp and turning to spun gold. Even so I hoped the wine would turn.

The seat next him was vacant, so with a "By your leave," I sat down.

He had stuck his ticket in the back of the seat in front of him and I plainly saw that it was marked "Waterbury."

We had left the tunnel before I spoke, as I did not quite know how to explain the situation to him.

At last I said,

"Isn't this Mr. Hayden of Waterbury?"



He showed me a bottle of table-claret

"No, sir," said he, stiffly. "It is not."

I felt as if I had been covered by an extinguisher. I pulled a note-book out of my pocket and scribbled nothings in it until I had recovered myself.

After awhile I looked at him out of the corner of my eye. He was surely Mr. Hayden. There were the whiskers and the gray clothes and—ah, in the rack above lay a bottle—evidently my bottle.

Suddenly it came over me that I had never seen Mr. Hayden and that there is no law against red whiskers. Anyone can wear them who has the material. Perhaps I had sat down beside the wrong man, after all.

He broke the silence.

"Just because I'm going to Waterbury to spend Christmas with my daughter, it does not follow that I am Mr. Hayden of Waterbury."

"No," said I, "but there are so many Haydens there that it seemed as if you must be he."

"Well, how do you know my name is Hayden?"

"Isn't it?" said I.

"Yes, but it doesn't follow logically that because I have a ticket in front of me marked 'Waterbury,' which you can plainly see, that my name is Hayden. What do you want of me?"

"Nothing that isn't my own," said I, hotly, for I realized that he thought I had designs on him.

"And what have I that's yours?"

"The bottle of wine in the rack above," said I.

"Are you a mind-reader?" said he, sarcastically.

"Then you admit that you have it?" said I, eagerly.

"I admit that I have wine but I don't admit that it's yours."

I turned around so as to face him and said earnestly, "All I ask is that you open the package and show it to me. You bought it at Bretal's and you picked up the wrong bottle by mistake. This bottle is mine."

"Well, what's the odds? What did you pay for yours?"

"I didn't pay for mine—that is—"

"Well, young man, I *did* pay for mine and it *is* mine, and I wish that you would

stop annoying me. If it's some Christmas joke I'm not in the mood for it. I don't know you and what's more I don't want to know you."

"Well, when it comes to that," said I, hotly, "I don't know you and I don't want to know you, but I do want my own wine and not the wine that you bought for yourself and which I haven't got."

"Well, if you haven't got the wine that I bought for myself what are you worrying about? I *have* the wine that I bought for myself and I intend to keep it."

"But wont you let me look at it?"

"No. Why should I? Do you suppose I bought the wine for the purpose of showing it to every stranger who sat down by my side? I was in a very pleasant Christmas-mood when you came in here, but now, by thunder, I'm getting very much disturbed, and if you don't stop annoying me I'll change my seat."

"I am only standing up for my rights," said I, as calmly as I could.

"Well, stand up, then, and leave me the whole seat. This train is not so crowded that you have to sit by *me*."

"I don't want to sit by you, Mr. Hayden, but I do want to see what kind of wine you have bought."

Our voices had insensibly risen and the men in front turned to see what the row was about.

Mr. Hayden spread out his paper and held it in front of him and I wished that I had thought to buy a paper so that I could do the same.

He had another paper in his lap.

"Do you mind if I borrow this?" said I, quickly.

"Certainly not," said he, thereby showing that he was by disposition an obliging man.

I opened the paper and shielded my face.

The action mollified us both somewhat, and for the moment I changed the subject, although I was by no means through with it.

I was determined to get my wine if I had to go home with him and call in the good offices of his daughter.

"It's good Christmas weather," said I, looking out at the falling snow.



"Isn't this Mr. Hayden of Waterbury?"

"Very good," said he, "for those that have shelter. I don't imagine that this snow appeals to those who are poorly clad."

"Christmas softens one, doesn't it?"

"Yes, in books," said he.

"And in real life, too," said I. "I don't believe you're so cynical as to deny that. I had something happen to me to-day," I continued, "that made me feel at peace with all the world."

"Is that why you came into this car to pester me with questions?" said he.

"No, it was because the cup of happiness, at it were, was dashed from my lips—"

"That you tried to get my bottle? Well, I'm sorry. What was the nature of your misfortune?"

Should I tell him? No. If I let him know the value of the bottle that lay in the rack above, cupidity might so seize on him as to make him forget that he was an honest man.

"I can't tell you," said I. "It might have happened to anyone. Now, will you let me see the label on your bottle?"

"Oh, show him the label," said a sarcastic voice two seats up on the right and I realized that again my voice had risen. I could have choked myself for mortification.

"I will not," said Mr. Hayden addressing not the voice but me.

"But the wine is mine," said I entering on the circuit again.

"Did you pay for it?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"That's my business."

"You say that the wine I have is yours by virtue of your not having paid for it. Kindly tell me where the logic of that statement lies."

"I'm not after logic," I said, "I'm after my wine."

"Where did you buy your wine?"

"I didn't buy it. It was given to me, if you want to know the truth."

"Your wine was given to you, therefore I have it. More logic."

"But wont you let me see if it's my wine?"

He seemed about to weaken.

"How would I know if it was your wine? Has it your name on it?"

"No, but I'll know it when I see it."

I think he must have had gout, for his temper turned and he said,

"But you'll not see it. I bought and paid for my wine and I intend to take it home. I'm afraid the trouble with you is that your wine is inside of you and you've swallowed the label also."

What I did was to swallow the insult. I also made up my mind to stick to this man until I had recovered my bottle, if it took all Christmas and necessitated my spending the night at his house. A good deal would depend upon the daughter and the way in which I presented the case to her.

I read the paper and for awhile said nothing.

"That paper is two days old. Perhaps you'd like a fresher one?" said Mr. Hayden.

I looked at the date. He was right. I don't take a paper regularly and news that is only forty-eight hours old is pretty fresh for me.

"I wasn't thinking of what I read. I was only wondering what it is that makes men stubborn."

"Well, I've been wondering the same thing, too. Stubbornness doesn't argue strength, and if I were you I'd give up all thought of getting a peep at my wine."

"But it's my wine. I tell you," said I, losing patience.

"Did you pay for it?" was the weary old question.

"No, I tell you, it was given to me."

"Kindly tell me who had the right to give you my wine which I bought and paid for? And if it was given to you, why haven't you got it? You see, I have you on every count. I bought the wine, I have it, and it's mine. You didn't buy it but it was given to you and yet you haven't it."

"Look here, Mr. Hayden," I said, resolved to try another tack, "what's the use of quarreling the first evening we ever met and on Christmas Eve, too? Let's go find some one to play whist with until we get to Bridgeport and we may both of us have a little more of the Christmas-feeling in us."

That underneath his crusty exterior Hayden was the right sort was proved at once, for he agreed to do as I asked, and taking his precious package in his left hand—I being on the right—we walked into the smoker, where we found two strangers willing to play, and until we reached Bridgeport we whiled away the time pleasantly, although I was merely making deposits of good feeling on which I intended to draw when it became necessary.

III

We changed at Bridgeport to the Naugatuck division and that broke up the game, but Mr. Hayden and I had won a rubber, and he felt in quite a genial mood as long as I did not talk about wine.

The night was sparkling and cold and the snow had stopped. We heard the jingle of sleigh-bells on the Bridgeport streets; the spirit of Christmas seemed abroad in the air.

"Do you live in Waterbury?" asked Mr. Hayden as we stepped over to the other train.

"No," said I, guardedly, "I'm just going up for Christmas."

"That's just what I'm doing. I don't keep house in New York. My daughter lives with her aunt in Waterbury and on holidays I always go up. Just myself and a few holiday presents to please the girl with."



More like an angel each time

"Including the wine," said I, tentatively.

"With the wine," said he, laughing and wagging his head as much as to say, "Don't you wish you might see that wine?"

He did ask me to drop in next day, if I was in the neighborhood, and his simplicity amused me.

"43 Forest street. Easy to reach. Up on the hill from the town."

The train for Waterbury was crowded and we were unable to get seats together, but I sat where I could see Mr. Hayden—also the package containing my bottle. He almost dropped it while putting it in the rack and my heart dropped also.

The way to Waterbury seemed very long. I revolved scheme after scheme for getting a look at the package. Once I was almost tempted, when I saw that he had fallen into a doze, to take down his bundle and open it, but that would have

laid me open to a grave charge had he waked up and denounced me.

I finally decided to get to his house ahead of him, if that were possible, and get his little girl to help me out. I pictured her as being about twelve and I thought I'd have no trouble.

But when we reached Waterbury I bethought me of the telephone and asked him if he had one and if so what was the number.

The unsuspecting soul told me, and after we had walked a block I bade him good-night.

"Merry Christmas," said he. "I'll tell you how I liked that wine if you come in to-morrow. Let you drink some."

Drink that wine! The thought gave me a chill.

He was hardly out of sight before I had gotten his daughter on the telephone.

"Is this Miss Hayden?"

"Yes, who are you?"

"I'm Mr. Moore. Has your father come home yet?"

"No, but I'm expecting him by the last train."

"When he comes will you kindly open a package he has and find out whether he has by mistake a bottle of 'Villa Madrico' wine?"

"Villa what?"

"Vil-la Mad-ri-co."

"Yes, and if he has?"

"I'll be there later. It belongs to me. I'll explain when I see you. Open it without asking him, as it's rather a joke on him, understand."

I heard laughter. Very sweet laughter, and it sounded older than twelve years. I was sorry I had not gone in person.

I would go in person and that at once. Mr. Hayden was to have taken a trolley and I would arrive just after the package had been opened and would depart in triumph with my valuable Christmas present.

It was not long before I reached the house. It was detached, with a little door yard in front. I noticed that there were no foot prints in the snow leading up to the door. Mr. Hayden was not yet home. That was queer.

Nevertheless, partly impelled by curiosity to see the owner of the sweet laugh, I rang the bell.

A vision opened the door. I know that it is old-fashioned to speak of visions but when flesh and blood assume the look that Miss Hayden had, vision is the only adequate word. She was not a little girl but just at the pleasant gate of womanhood.

I raised my hat. "Is this Miss Hayden?" said I.

"Yes, wont you step inside?" said she, calmly. There are those who hate to admit strangers but it is not flattery for me to say that I do not inspire fear in women.

"I see that your father has not returned unless he came by air-ship. I called you up on the telephone a few minutes ago. I'm Mr. Moore."

I was glad he had not come because it would give me an opportunity to talk to her. Not two minutes since I had met her and already my bachelor heart was

bowled over and my mind, working with the tremendous rapidity characteristic of the human brain under stress of circumstances had pictured me paying this beautiful woman the homage of my love.

To be sure, if her father was yet to come it would make it harder for me to get a look at the wine but—

Why, what is wine compared to a vision?

"No, he has not come. I think the train must have been late. Christmas Eve, you know. Wont you come into the parlor and wait for him?"

We entered the parlor together. "Why, we came up to Waterbury on the same train," I said. "He had started for home when I telephoned. You see, this joke of the bottle—"

"Why, what can have detained him?" said Miss Hayden, evidently alarmed. "He is very methodical."

"Oh, I dare say he stopped in to get cigars—"

But she did not hear me. She was plainly worried about her father.

And then a horrid thought came to me. If anything had happened to Mr. Hayden, what about my bottle?

She excused herself and went up-stairs.

I sat where I could command the street and watched for the home-coming of the man with red side whiskers, with an anxiety that would have astonished me if anyone had prophesied it that morning.

A half hour passed, during which time Miss Hayden came into the room half a dozen times, looking more like an angel each time and also growing more disturbed.

I felt very sorry for her and did hope that if her father was injured, it was not serious and that he had fallen bottle-side up.

At last I saw two men mounting the steep hill that led to the house. One of them was helping the other. Their progress was slow and it was some time before I could make out that one was Mr. Hayden, limping.

As he came nearer I looked for his package. It was not there!

Miss Hayden came into the room and found me looking earnestly down the

street. She came so close to me that her dress touched me. How nice and slow her father's progress was. But where was the bottle?

"It's your father," said I, "and I'm afraid—"

"He's hurt himself—"

"That he's broken the bottle."

"Oh, bother the bottle," said she, with an adorable suggestion of her father's manner — adorable because it was *her* suggestion, not because it reminded me of him.

"Yes, but such bottles as he had don't grow out of the pavement."

The stranger, a plain looking man in a rough overcoat somewhat too large for him, approached the steps and half carried her father up. His daughter met him at the door and covered his face with kisses. That's what it is to be a father.

"What has happened to my dear papa?" said she.

"I slipped on the ice on Bank street and twisted my ankle and nearly cut my throat on a plaguey bottle of wine I was bringing up."

All was lost.

Miss Hayden spent some more time in kissing her father and thanking the stranger who had helped him on and off the trolley and who now helped him to the sofa, and then she remembered me and said,

"Oh, here's Mr. Moore who wanted to see your bottle."

He laughed savagely as I came out from behind the lace curtains.

"Pertinacious," said he as he saw me, but when I saw his pained face and realized that the bottle was gone forever, I felt only sorrow for the father of Miss Hayden, and as if it had been a mere bagatelle, I said:

"It was only a whim, my desire to look at the label. I'm very sorry you've



"I came back with it"

hurt yourself. I wanted to see the bottle because if it was mine it was worth pretty nearly a thousand dollars."

"Wha—at!" yelled Mr. Hayden from his seat on the sofa. "Well, I didn't say the bottle was gone. I said I came near cutting my windpipe on it but it didn't break. My man, will you show it to him? I gave him the bottle for helping me."

The man, who looked like a car-driver or motorman put his hand into his capacious pocket and drew out the bottle.

"Mr. Hayden, will you please give him five dollars for me?" said I. "I'll settle with you later."

The fellow accepted the bill with thanks and went away, perhaps not realizing that he had done an unusual thing in relinquishing a present that had suddenly proved to have great value.

Miss Hayden watched with sparkling eyes and her father's had something of animation in them as with trembling fingers I opened the precious package.

It contained a bottle of American Port worth at the outside fifty cents.

I stared blankly at Mr. Hayden; his daughter looked from him to me.

Mr. Hayden was seized with a twinge of pain. "Well, are you satisfied now?" said he, sardonically.

"Some one has my bottle," said I. "I've simply been tracking the wrong man."

"So I was tracked—"

I interrupted Mr. Hayden with an exclamation. The paper in which the bottle had been wrapped lay on the floor at my feet and I noticed that it bore the name of a Waterbury grocery house.

"That wine's neither yours nor mine," said I.

He took hold of the bottle and looked at it.

"You're right. What hocus-pocus is this? You think I have your wine and I think I have my own and I have—"

He stopped and we sat staring at each other until a sudden ring at the door caused Miss Hayden to answer it. A moment later she came into the parlor, followed by the man who had befriended Mr. Hayden. He stood there awkwardly for a minute, his long and heavy overcoat hanging loosely about him.

"Well, my friend, what's the trouble?" said Mr. Hayden, not unkindly, in spite of the twinge of pain.

"I made a mistake," said the man. "You see, my wife aint well and the doctor said she must have wine an' I bought a bottle, an' slipped it in me pocket, an' then when you gave me the other I thought it was Christmas-luck, an' I slipped it in the other pocket, and just now I handed out the wrong one. Seein' that this gentleman's wine was so valuable I came back with it."

He produced the bottle, I quickly tore off the paper and there was my precious vintage of 1743.

Quite mad with joy, I seized Miss Hayden in my arms and hugged her to me.

That was Christmas Eve. To-day, as we started on our wedding-trip, she told me frankly that when she first met me she thought I was entirely too free until her father told her that I was an artist and then she understood.

And Bretal's check brought me good luck.

\$800.00.

The Object Lesson

BY J. O. CURWOOD

Author of "The Bravery of Captain Plum," etc

IT was the groaning, wailing horror of five thousand human voices that rose above the thunder of the sea, a deep-throated rumbling of men punctuated by the shrill screams of women—a sound that grew until all other sound died

away and the wind lashed unheard, and from where the seas swept up almost to the feet of the multitude there came but a subdued murmur.

For an hour that multitude had stood there. At times it had prayed. It had

cursed. Even to the women it had shrieked its hope, its horror, its malediction into the teeth of the storm. It was a drenched, exhausted, hopeless multitude; drenched by the chilling spume shot in by the gale, weakened to delirium by the sight before its eyes, and hopeless—as hopeless as . . . One voice had said that, in a maddened shriek, and it was a woman's voice. The woman was crumpled in the sand; the spray fell over her in sheets; her long black hair clung to her in drenched masses; her eyes were insanely terrible; her lips were bleeding. She cried upon God—and she cursed the men behind her. An old man, with white hair and beard, clung to her dress and joined her in unheard imprecation, mumbling in voiceless prayer when his sand-blistered eyes turned red and wild out to sea.

Four hundred—five hundred yards out there—a ship was going to pieces, a black, steel thing of eight thousand tons or so, loaded with ore. Aboard her there were, or had been, thirty living creatures like those that made up the multitude. Now there were six. The multitude could see them: four clinging like ants to the forward upper works, two twisting and swinging to the end of the life-line aft. And between the two and the four the ship's back was broken, and as the midships sunk and the sea spurted over it in a frothing maelstrom there had risen above all other tumult that great sobbing moan of human voices.

But that was all. There had been no effort made at rescue. There was none made now. A boat *might* have lived in those seas, but it would have been a thousand to one chance. And even the little group of men at the life-saving station a third of a mile away could not muster up the courage to take that thousandth chance. The multitude had cursed it, and had threatened it, but no person in it had offered himself as a sacrifice, with the exception of the old white haired man kneeling in the sand beside the woman. He was a retired captain named McVee. The woman, who had joined him in his exhortation, was a stranger.

"It's no use, cap'n," the chief of the

crew had said. "We couldn't live two minutes in that sea! It would be death —"

"You lie!" shouted the old man. "You lie! You're afraid—*afraid*—"

He turned back to the crowd, the panting, wild-eyed woman close behind him, and called for men. Who would go with him? Who would join him in an attempt at a rescue? His thin voice rose half-unheard. The wind caught it and twisted it into unintelligible sound. Women who understood stilled their sobs and cries; men fell back, quietly, and let him pass. Those who had cursed at the cowardice of the life-savers became mute. And at last the woman sank upon her knees where the spume of the sea fell over her in torrents, and stretched her arms out to the ship.

"Joe—My Joe—"

Only the old captain heard her moaning cry. He put a thin, trembling arm about her shoulders. The wind whipped the masses of her hair around him, but when the freighter broke she had torn herself away, with him clinging to her dress. She saw the two men hanging aft. She counted the four ahead. Only six—*out of thirty!* Something seemed to burst in her head, she felt herself swaying as if about to fall, and blindly she groped to the old captain for support.

Now there fell a terrible silence. From the distance of the life-saving station the crowded thousands became an immobile line of black, lifeless and motionless. In an instant every voice had become hushed, and every eye stared toward the wreck. The after part of the ship, where the two men clung, was sinking. It was going foot by foot, with an excruciating, torturing slowness. The multitude had seen twenty-four other human souls swept into eternity, but they had been swallowed in huge, bursting seas that had quickly hidden detail. This was different. It was death reduced to inches.

The forward part of the ship was solid, rammed hard upon the bottom. The life line leading from it to the aft cabin was still unbroken, and an almost imperceptible stir swept through the crowd as one of the two men poised

himself, with his arms stretched over his head. It was a black, smoky city of Lake people that lay over beyond the beach and those of it who had gathered upon the shore knew what was about to happen. The stir was caused by women—and men—but mostly women, turning away. They might have looked upon death in certain forms. But not this.

For a brief spell the man stood there, gargoyle-like, leaning over the end of the galley. Through the gray mist of wind-torn waves there was no visible movement to him at that distance of four hundred yards. The sharpest eyes might have seen that his head was turned toward his companion, who, no more than a formless blot, had flattened himself against a davit. A man with a glass had said that this blot was a boy.

Now the figure leaned out farther, slowly, but perceptibly. He was almost horizontal when he swung down toward the frothing sea. For a few instants he was hidden in a thunder of spume. Then the multitude saw him again, swinging like a toy on a string, and with three hundred feet between him and the pilot house. Hand over hand he traveled along the life-line, with the sea now a dozen feet beneath him, then at his heels, setting him twisting and writhing whenever it struck as high as his ankles. For a few times he doubled himself, like a jack-knife, and escaped their fury as they ran under, but at each succeeding effort his legs dangled lower. He had gone a third of the distance. Now a half. The blot against the empty davit lengthened itself, crawled face downward to the line, and rose to its knees. The boy was preparing to follow over the life-line.

From the women there went out a shriek of anguish, of warning, that was swallowed and smothered in the wind. There was no chance for *him*. The watching thousands knew that, and again a murmur of horror rose above the tumult of the sea.

The boy slipped out, as the man had done, and gripped the cable. For a minute he waited, and watched the struggling figure that was now within seventy feet of the pilot-house. It was

progressing with terrible slowness. A minute more and it stopped, arms and legs stretched down, as if weighted with lead. The cap of a sea caught it as high as the waist, for a few moments it swung and twisted like a rag to a clothes-line, and when the next sea came the line was bare. The boy drew back, the multitude watching, still voiceless. He gripped the empty davit-arm, and flattened himself until he became once more a lifeless, formless blot.

The woman in the sand staggered to her feet, and stood swaying. She was a young woman, and with the exception of the spots of red on her lips her face was deathly white. Her hair and her eyes would have made many men call her beautiful. She turned to the crowd, but she was unperceptive of detail. She saw there only a mass of pallid, cowardly faces. Her heart surged with a bitter hatred of them all. They were cowards—cowards! The words burned in her brain, her lips trembled with them, yet there was no sound.

"Cowards—cowards—"

A young man who had been looking at the wreck through a glass came out from the line to help her. She struck at him and tore her way through the crowd, panting at every step those soundless words—cowards—cowards—cowards. The old man followed her, like a dog. They passed beyond the black line of people. In their haste they scattered a frightened throng of children huddled farther back on the beach. They sped toward the life-saving station; but that, too, and the little group of hopeless men there, were unseen by the woman. That hot, burning *something* in her head had given way. She ran, swifter and swifter, she thought, but at each step her feet dragged deeper into the sand. Beyond the life-saving station she fell in a wide sweep of dunes and lay there as if dead.

But her brain was working. In a flash it had leaped a distance of two hundred miles. She saw, in her moment's delirium, the little home there, *their* home, with its trees and its garden; she saw *his* room, with its pictures of ships, its charts, and its hundred memories of the

lakes he sailed. She had descended to that home, with its modest comfort and atmosphere of economy. She had given up a life of luxury to share this cottage with a man who would be a captain—soon. That was the story. And the man had failed—partly. He had not become a captain, and he brooded over the fact, mostly because of the woman.

"You were rich, Jean," he had said on his last short visit home. "You had everything that the world could give you. And I brought you to *this*. Sometimes—I—am—sorry."

That last scene came like a passing flash to the woman in the sand. She had put her arms up about his shoulders, and had smiled in her happiness, and had told him that there was one thing that the world had never held for her before—and that was love. After he had gone back to his ship the woman sat down and cried—for two reasons, but mostly for one. That abyss seemed always between them. A thousand times she had tried to bridge it. What did *she* care for what she had left so long as she had *him*! He had failed; at least he *thought* that he had failed, but to the woman it was not failure. She loved him, and she loved the little cottage-nest that he had made for her, and there were times, when she thought of his thoughts, that she regretted the day she had been born in a mansion instead of in just such another little cottage, with the lilacs growing almost to its gray-aged roof. And then, one day, there came a sudden, thrilling knowledge into her soul, the knowledge that another soul—the embryo of a new life—had come into her being, and she was filled with a strange, calm joy that remained always with her. Oh, how she longed to tell the man, how she longed to see him, and to tell him, with her face close up against his breast. She did not write. She waited, day after day; and then, urged by her great, throbbing joy she had gone to meet him—to surprise him—at a port two hundred miles away. Then the storm, the daring rush for harbor, the treacherous shoal beyond the breakwater! It had all happened before her eyes, and now it was ending with HER looking on!

She staggered to her feet and ran desperately down to where the sea beat in, wild-eyed, half mad. If she could only let him know! If she could only let him know! She stretched out her arms and called to him, again and again. She ran along the shore, looking, hunting, with an insane fire in her eyes, and moaning his name. If she could only reach him, just to die there at his side—AND LET HIM KNOW! It did not occur to her that he might have gone with the other twenty-five. He was there—still—with the five!

She ran farther and farther, until she came to where a ditch of water divided the dunes—a narrow canal half filled with sand that reached back to a boat-house. Bobbing up and down in it was a skiff tied to an iron ring in an old spar. When the old captain reached her she was upon her knees beside the spar, her trembling fingers fumbling in futile efforts at the knot.

"Joe—Joe—I'm going out to Joe!"

The old man caught her by the arm. She could not hear his voice, but saw the negative shake of his head.

"I'm going!" she shrieked up at him. "I'm going—going—"

Her companion turned his face toward the sea. For a moment he stood there, a furious heat in his soul warping his reason. If they went out—they two—and one of them a woman, would it inspire a spark of courage in those thousands? The woman was battling with the knot, sobbing for his help. Until yesterday she had been a stranger to him. On this beach he had learned a little of her story, and had rejoiced with her in the happiness that was to come with the ship. He was old—too old to master a crew—but the blood of the old Lake-breed was still strong within him. It grew hot now. New life throbbed in his shriveled limbs. He turned back to the woman, with a knife in his hand, and cut the rope.

Together they climbed into the bobbing skiff and the old man took both oars. The beach circled here, like the quarter of a cart wheel, and the wind that beat in the face of the lifeboats aided the frail craft and swept it out into the heavy seas. The woman crouched

in the stern, her hands gripping the gun-wales. The deathly pallor had fled from her face. Her lips were parted. A feverish glow burned in her cheeks. Her eyes were luminous with excitement, hope, eagerness. They looked over and beyond the old man—to the wreck. It was looming up larger every instant. She could see the pilot-house, like a gray rock outside the breakwater, and against it she saw two black spots, that were men. One of them—one of those remaining two—was Joe, *her* Joe! She reasoned no farther than this. And she was going to him! She released her hold of the gun-wales to stretch out her arms and the wind caught and tore her shrieking greeting. Did he see her? Did he *know* her? She heard the old man's voice cry out warningly, and shrank back, crumpled close down, as she remembered he had told her to lie. For a moment she turned her eyes upon him. He was fighting magnificently, like a giant. His white hair had flattened itself about his thin face. His long beard was soaked upon his breast. Backward—forward—backward—forward—she watched the movement of his oars. And she smiled, smiled in her madness until her face was the most beautiful thing the old captain had ever looked upon, and his worn-out eyes glowed with new courage, his arms pulled a little stronger.

From the shore the gathered thousands saw the skiff and there rose again that monotone of human voices, killed by the wind and the thunder of the sea. The black line moved. The group beside the distant lifeboat split into a dozen units. People were moving swiftly along the beach. But the woman saw nothing of this. Again her eyes were upon the wreck. She realized no danger in the fury of the seas that almost engulfed them; the smothering volleys of spume whipped from their crests caused her only momentary discomfort; the wind, tearing her hair and driving the breath from her frail body, was the blessing of God. This she realized, even in her insane oblivion to all things but the wreck and the two men upon it. It was driving them nearer—nearer; every fierce blast of it shot them more and more abreast

their goal, and now the old man was pulling on one oar alone, pulling with both hands, with the strength of youth in his last supreme effort.

The two creatures on the wreck had seen them. Through the blinding spray the woman saw one of them raise his arm. It was her husband—her Joe! He recognized her—knew that she was coming to him! It made no difference that the man was only a blot to her—a moving, living being with swinging arm. It was *Joe*. And he recognized her! In her madness she believed this, and she held out her arms again, and shrieked his name. She felt herself swaying. Something seemed clutching at her throat, stifling the breath in her bosom, and she fell forward upon her face, her dripping hair burying the old man's feet. In a few moments she heard him shouting down at her and she struggled to her knees. The black side of the ship was very near. Two men were there, leaning far over in the beat of the seas, their arms stretched down to receive them. Through the white mist she saw one face, a face filled with the terror that may fall once, but never twice, to the lot of a human being, and there came out through that mist a great cry—*her name!*

The woman staggered to her feet, swaying between life and death, and the old captain dropped from his seat and caught her protectingly about the knees.

"Joe!" she shrieked.

She stretched up her arms as the skiff crashed against the steel wall, and then something lifted her up—up—and that something dragged her back out of the drench, and she knew that she was close, crushingly close, in a strong man's arms. And at her feet, when she opened her eyes, there was the old man with his head resting in the hollow of a strange seaman's arm.

Back on the beach the young man with the glass turned and shouted.

"By all that's good, they made it—safe!"

And then there went up a roar from the multitude.

Shooting out into the seas, filled with men, went the lifeboat.

Appearances Are —

BY BEATRICE HANSCOM

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERICK J. MULHAUPT

BROMWELL let himself into the daintily comfortable living-hall with a subconscious satisfaction that it was his own—his and Cecily's!

Oh, the joy of the things that you have had to work for!

He hung his hat upon the hat-tree with the same pride of possession he had had the night it came home.

It had been a delight to watch Cecily choose it, after deliciously feminine waverings, and he had been conscious of a feeling of sympathy towards several of its fellows upon whom she had bestowed a fleeting regard—and finally declined.

To have been considered—and rejected—by Cecily was enough to produce despair in man or manufacturer!

Among the uncountable things he loved in Cecily was her way of making small things matters of importance. She enjoyed trifles so bewitchingly.

And she insisted on considering Economy—and Economy had insisted on being considered—as a game of infinite zest, worthy one's best strategy and finesse.

It hurt Bromwell fiercely that he couldn't give her Everything—that Everything she had had until she married him.

"Oh, my dear, my dear," she had said with sweet seriousness once, when the hurt came out, "so long as You and I are We, the world is all right. And so is the English Grammar," she finished gayly.

Cecily was, indeed, the Queen of Trumps!

And thanks to the gods, and to pretty strenuous exertions on Bromwell's part, the most economical days were over.

He began to whistle blithely as he started up the stairs to the nursery, where Mrs. Bromwell was usually to

be found at the twilight hour; and he stopped in the nursery door to admire the picture which it framed.

Mrs. Bromwell was inducing her small son to allow her to try on an article of headgear so freshly, crisply new, that the still remaining price-tag seemed tautological.

"And here comes our noble father to see how lovely we are looking," she announced beguilingly, as there seemed to be a slight difference of opinion about having the ribbon-strings tied under a certain chubby chin.

"What do I see?" demanded Bromwell, with such a dramatic expression of surprise that Billy Bromwell forgot the indignity of the strings, in his joy at exciting such parental astonishment. "Is this Billy in a lovely new hat? No! It cannot be! Yes. It is! Well, well! I hadn't dreamed of encountering such magnificence in our quiet family circle," he concluded, picking Billy up in his strong arms to the infantile delight.

"Now," he said comfortably, "we will all sit together upon this springy divan, and indulge in what Du Maurier called 'light conversation that involves no strain on the intellect.'"

He interposed Billy deftly between himself and the laughing lady on the other end of the divan, as if he feared sudden physical violence.

"Having put the solar system in good running order for the day," said Mrs. Bromwell, with parenthetical effect.

"And sometimes your aged parent gets a jolt and sees stars," Bromwell confided to the cherub. "Not the pretty theatrical kind, but the icy sidewalk variety. To-day wasn't that kind of a day, however. Not even a stray pocket has been rifled along the Potomac."

He smiled coaxingly at Mrs. Bromwell for approval.



The trio was in tune with the latest mode

"Bob," she said, putting out a white hand to meet his, "are we feeling prosperous?"

"Fairly affluent," returned Bromwell, leaning over to tuck up a stray lock that was waving off into space.

"Why?" he demanded. "Have we found a bargain of a chair? Or a table that only needs to be redressed, and have its deep-sea-going legs stiffened, to be just as good as it was a hundred years ago? For if you have," he finished solemnly, "we will go out hand in hand, and get it. The taste for antiques is not entirely on your side of the family."

"Father and mother want us to come home for a little visit," said Mrs. Bromwell simply, "and I wondered if we couldn't go."

There had been other invitations of the same kind when she hadn't even wondered, but had sent off pretty notes of regret and postponement — notes in which she carefully did not state that they needed the money for other things. It was because Bob had an important case, or some other reason redounding to his credit. And she was much too clever to begin going without him.

The feeling between her husband and

her father was a kind of armed neutrality. She meant in due time that they should be friends. And she was one of those rare people who know how to wait.

Mrs. Overbeck, who was as sweet as you would expect Cecily's mother to be, had run over several times for a few days' visit; but Mr. Overbeck had announced firmly that he was "no visitor;" and for once, at least, I am inclined to think he was right.

For Mr. Overbeck was about as difficult to get on with as he declared other people to be.

He was an opinionated elderly gentleman who was only happy when he was attending to business; and he was proud of his money with the pride of a man who has purchased his first evening-clothes at forty, with many protests and merely to oblige his wife.

With more years, and his next million, however, he developed a strong personal interest in his own attire and delighted in checked suits that were—the checks, be it understood—as large and striking as the bill.

He had a way of saying: "I *will* always have the *best* of everything!" that was really offensively prosperous, though he was quite unconscious of it; just as was his statement that if you would only save a third of your income, you were sure to get on.

He had declared that if Cecily wanted to marry Bromwell, that was her affair.

He had always given her everything she wanted, and he shouldn't interfere now.

"But where she stands, she could just as well get a good dividend-paying stock as go into a development-company," he added, employing the verbiage most familiar to him.

Perhaps having made his own way made him prefer those who had finished the process. He knew how many difficulties there could be on the forward path.

There was the usual kind friend who told Bromwell.

For two reasons Bromwell was determined to succeed in life. First, for Cecily's sake; and second, to show Mr. Overbeck.

He thanked the fates that he happened to have a few hundred dollars free just now.

"Of course we can go," he said quite as cheerfully as if he were yearning to visit Mr. Overbeck. "Let us all get some new clothes and present ourselves in our full and radiant loveliness. When do you propose to start?"

"I thought of a week from Saturday," she murmured.

Then her tone changed to swift practicality.

"I don't think I really *need* a new tailor-suit," she said. "My old one is a trifle battered, but it can be freshened up all right. And there will be quite a number of things I *should* like Billy to have. There is an adorable little coat at Rumley's," she mused, with the air of one who has long resisted temptation.

"Buy it!" said Bromwell firmly, "and lots of other things for him. And you may think again about your tailor-suit. Buy a new one. And buy a dream, if you love me. We are no prodigal sons returning in husky garments, mind."

"Look here, Cecily," he said seriously. "You and I have to make lots of economies together; and there isn't anything that puts force into my working-power like the feeling that you are willing to make them with me, for *our* future. But I want to take my wife back to her old home, for the first time after her marriage, just as daintily outfitted as I can. Without being foolishly extravagant, I want to put up the very best front possible. I *am* getting on nicely, and I want you to play right up to the limit of what we can afford. My residence on this mundane sphere has taught me that Appearances are Necessary. Will you promise me to get a lot of stunning things?"

"I promise," said Mrs. Bromwell, solemnly.

The weather-man presented them with the nicest day he had on hand with which to begin their trip. It was such a nice day it almost took away their enthusiasm about going. Home looked so attractive.

But once in the Pullman, it seemed a delightful sensation to be taking a journey together.

And the trio was in tune with the latest mode.

Bromwell had on his new suit, just home from the tailor's; and it gave him that sustaining sensation that a new suit always does.

He glanced with decided approval at Mrs. Bromwell, who had obeyed his injunctions to the letter; and in her new gray tailor-suit, with a pale gray hat matching it precisely in shade, which poised itself upon her head with an airy lightness indicating clearly a Gallic ancestry, while a pair of white wings adorning it indicated no less clearly that it was an appropriate headgear for a deliciously feminine angel—and Mrs. Bromwell, thus attired, *was* a dream!

As for Billy Bromwell, he sat complacently admiring himself in the mirror opposite, garbed as he was in his new hat and all the elegance of the coat from Rumley's.

"Takes to luxury naturally," Bromwell murmured to his wife, nodding to her to notice the naïve joy which the youthful Billy had not yet learned to mask. "Like the old valentine, he wishes he had 'a silver tongue, and words of purest gold.'"

Mrs. Bromwell smiled a bit absently. She was hoping the house would be all right. It seemed an unkindness to have left it behind—the dear little home! Then she swung yearningly back in thought to her girl-home, her mother, and her father—and that reminded her.

"You go and smoke, and Billy and I will amuse ourselves," she suggested artfully.

Her hand stole toward the clasp of her handbag.

"If you brought It, trot it out," said Bromwell meanly. "It will be your last day," he chuckled, for Mrs. Bromwell's laughing pout showed that the shot told.

"You know," she said, with mock reproach, "that father would be so pleased if Billy recognized him the first thing.

"Who is it, Precious?" she coaxed, extracting a photograph from the bag in question, and holding it engagingly before her son.

He gazed at it indifferently.

"Danpa!" he announced languidly.

This constant question was growing monotonous. She seemed to have forgotten how many other things he knew that were far more interesting—what does Pussy say, and things like that. The masculine mind likes variety, even at an early age.

"You should teach from the round, not from the flat," said Bromwell oracularly.

"Now I," he continued suavely, "have for some days past been pointing out all portly and whiskered gentlemen as possible grandfathers."

"You haven't!" said Mrs. Bromwell aghast.

"Especially whiskered," he continued. "Look, Billy, who's that?" he whispered, as a fat German, fairly rioting in hirsute adornment, came down the aisle.

If Billy had known Latin, he would have said: "*Et tu, Brute!*" but as it was, he infused a distinctly *blasé* accent into the one word they wanted to hear.

"You see!" chuckled his father.

"But if he calls them all that!" expostulated Mrs. Bromwell.

"Your father insists on his servants being clean-shaven. Billy won't see anybody else at first. And first impressions are what you're counting on, aren't they?" he defended.

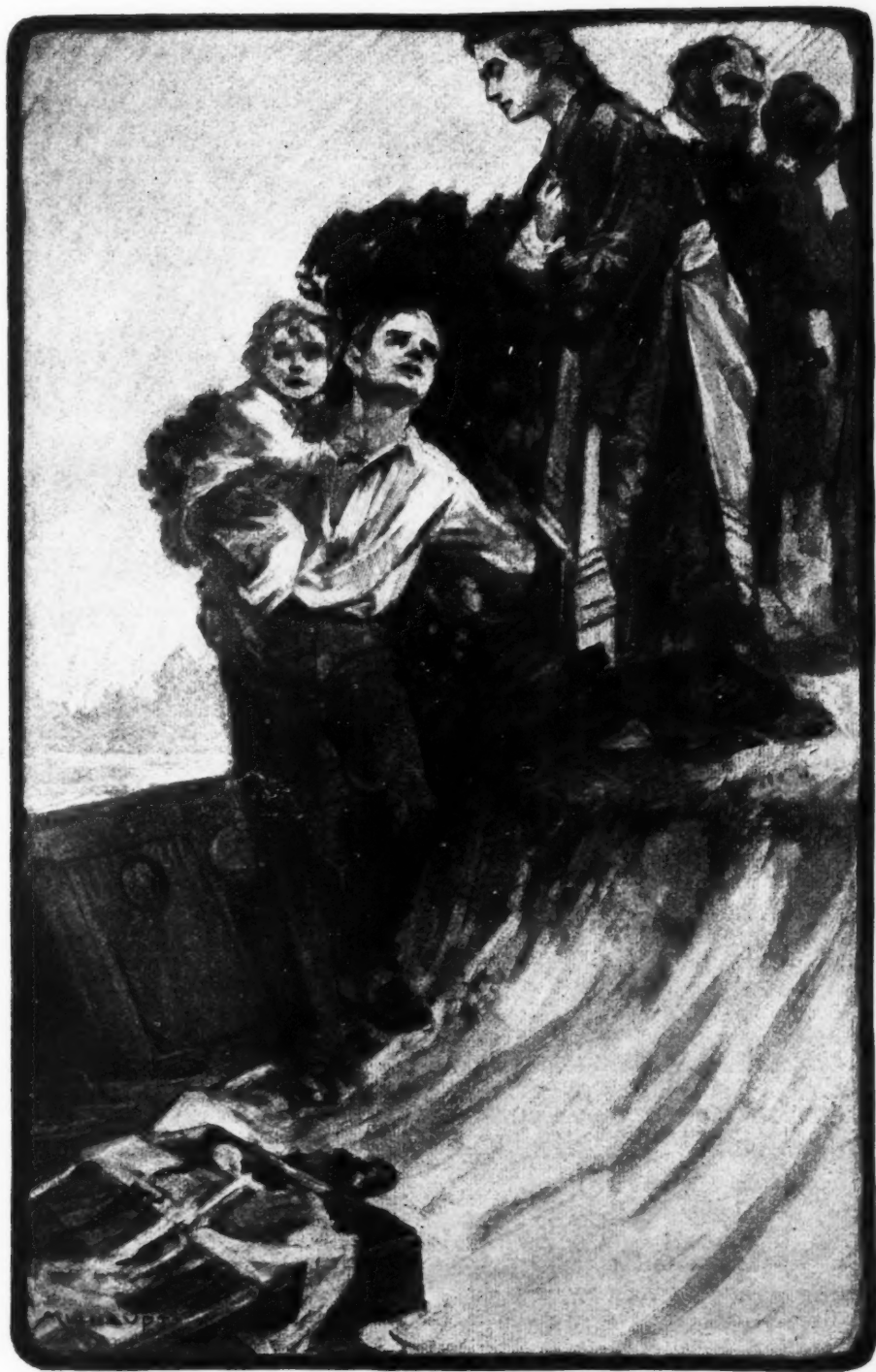
"Ye—es," she admitted, weakening. "And aren't we all beautiful!" she demanded gayly.

"We are," said Bromwell, with conviction. "In fact," he added, "when I gaze upon us, I consider that singly and combinedly our stylish appearance is such, that, when we descend from the train in the morning, any millionaire would welcome us into his family with pride!"

It was not a bad accident, as railroad accidents go. The rainy season, instead of depressing the river, as it had done everyone else, had actually made it more buoyant. I am afraid the river was rather rapid, anyway.

And the river-bank did not have that unyielding firmness which is the foundation of all good character.

It was unfortunate that just at the instant they decided to elope together, the



All this happened with a swiftness that made it seem like a bad dream

train should have come along; because, unlike most clopers, they did not in the least wish to take a train.

But there you are. Fate has its imperfections.

The river-bank murmured something about the iron entering her soul, and sighed deeply; but she went! Alas! She went.

When banks fail in doing their duty, something always happens to those who depend on them.

Something happened this time.

The train lurched, turned on its side, and slid gratingly down into Rockford's river much after the fashion of a small boy trying his sled too early in the season.

Little drops of water and little grains of sand filtered with great promptitude into the partially submerged cars.

To be thrown from one's berth as merely one of many projectiles; to land, huddled, in muddy water, with an embarrassing number of valises and other peoples' clothes; to be dragged, *sans cérémonie*, to windows hastily broken open; and finally, to stand on shore, in the chill of the early morning, bruised and insufficiently clad, surrounded by a crowd of fellow-sufferers whose laments and reproaches produced a composite vocalization most depressing in effect; to be told that a relief train would come in an hour—or more: all this happened to the Bromwells with a swiftness of sequence which made it seem like a bad dream.

Their hurried inventory of actual physical injury disclosed:

1. One hand bleeding profusely: the property of Mrs. Bromwell, who had found herself clutching a broken pair of eye-glasses, ownership unknown.

This hand being bandaged, attention was now turned to

2. One rapidly-rising swelling on the top of the head, belonging to Bromwell, who being on the down-side, had been smitten with Mrs. Bromwell's umbrella, in its descent from the top berth opposite: an unkindness which was enough to incline one against providing for a rainy day.

Billy Bromwell, being sound as a nut;

and disposed to regard the whole affair as arranged for his benefit, and on the whole, very creditable, took a sympathetic interest in his father's cranial disfigurement.

"Bunk!" he cooed, patting it softly, as Bromwell held him in his arms, encased in what had yesterday been Mrs. Bromwell's new gray jacket, wrapped around his nighty.

"Correct you are! Bump it is, and Bunker Hill it feels like," said Bromwell cheerfully, or as cheerfully as could be expected of a man clad only in shirt and trousers, one shoe, and a rubber overshoe of surprising size.

He looked anxiously at his wife, standing with a car-blanket wrapped around her kimono, beneath which her bed-slippered feet were visible.

"You are all right now?" he demanded.

Mrs. Bromwell regarded herself with a grimace.

Then she giggled, though her teeth had a tendency to chatter.

"Oh, yes, I'm all r-r-right," she gasped. "Of course, all my clothes are buried in that c-car, and most of my hairpins are l-lost." She gave a quick little nod, and her pompadoured hair slid forward at rather an alarming angle. Nothing, however, could make her anything but pretty. "And I feel like a fox-terrier with a wounded p-paw," she went on, "but I'm all right. Ki-yi! Ki-yi!" she yelped, holding up the bandaged member after the fox-terrier fashion. Then she joined her husband in laughter unrestrained: an unaccountable proceeding, which caused the fat German who was standing near them, to pull his sandy beard in amazement.

"Vonny beebles!" he commented to himself.

"You are the dearest little brick ever!" said Bromwell with conviction. "If you could only take care of the kiddie without hurting your hand, I'd make a fire to thaw us out. I've promised the porter a dollar for every article belonging to us that he can fish out of the car, and two, if he gets my other shoe. He's been an Izaak Walton ever since. This rubber of his wont stay on. You would

not think that was a five-dollar rubber, would you?" he demanded. "But he wouldn't sell it for a cent less."

"It's the design, I suppose," Mrs. Bromwell murmured frivolously. "Wide and roomy, like the closets the architects are always going to put in, and don't."

The German gentleman touched Bromwell on the shoulder.

"Dot fire-woot pe goot bizness," he said amiably. "I holt *das kindchen!*"

He opened his arms hospitably.

"If he'll let you," said Mrs. Bromwell dubiously.

"Zo!" said the German gentleman, taking Billy with practiced hands. "All little poy's loaf me. You to not know who it iss, eh?" he demanded genially.

The German gentleman was large and soft and warm. Billy Bromwell looked on him with favor. There was no reason to disoblige him in so small a matter.

"Danpa!" he cooed pleasantly, and snuggled.

"Goot!" said the German gentleman, highly pleased. "Now we will zit, iss it not?"

He waved Mrs. Bromwell to a place on the blanket he had spread on the ground, with a cheerful air, not to be denied.

"One day you must bring your little poy to my *braueri* in Chicago," he observed. "I haf *Münchner-kinder* on efery puilding," he continued placidly, seating himself opposite Mrs. Bromwell on the blanket with Billy in his arms. "Und I haf little volks off my own, too," he continued.

"How many children have you?" Mrs. Bromwell inquired sweetly, entering into the spirit of the thing zestfully.

"But elefen!" said the German gentleman regretfully. "I vould loaf a pig vamily to haf," he sighed.

A suspiciously strangled sound came from the retreating Bromwell.

"It iss a pad cold your husband hass," the German gentleman sympathized.

But Mrs. Bromwell recognized that it had been a chuckle, and not a sneeze.

Mr. and Mrs. Overbeck, arriving punctually at the station in a motor-car—that chuffily announced its horsepower,

much as Mr. Overbeck announced that "he would have the best"—were met by the dismal intelligence of a train wrecked, and that a relief-train would arrive with the passengers an hour and a half later.

It was a dreadful hour-and-a-half.

First, for Mr. and Mrs. Overbeck: for they were left to the gloomiest forebodings after the station-authorities had assured them that it would be useless to try to reach the scene of disaster in their motor, since the relief-train was even then under way.

Second, for the station-authorities: for in addition to the multitude of troubles caused by the wrecked train, they had Mr. Overbeck on their hands.

And Mr. Overbeck's remarks on American railways were positively libelous.

He finished off every fresh outbreak and every official he could encounter with the statement that there was just one good thing in Europe—this was more than Mr. Overbeck had before admitted—and that was that when *they* had a railroad accident, some official of the road was guillotined, or shot, or hanged, or drawn and quartered, and that was the way it ought to be.

There was a composite sigh of relief at the station when the train finally came in.

It was a motley lot of people who descended from it; astonishingly clad, and unclad, bundle-beladen, their personal loveliness reduced to its lowest terms, and in many cases represented by an unknown quantity.

The waiting crowd, eager to receive its own particular friends, was pushed back to let the wayfarers off.

Mr. and Mrs. Overbeck, standing with nerves strained to meet casualty in some yet unknown form, gave a gasp together, as a young woman stepped off the rear car.

"She can walk, anyway," muttered Mr. Overbeck, swallowing.

"But her p-poor hand! And her c-clothes!" cried Mrs. Overbeck.

It is, indeed, not customary for a lady, traveling, to appear at her destination attired in a floating garment of black



It was a motley lot of people who descended

china silk fashioned after the manner of the Orient, with flowing sleeves which a discerning breeze blew back to show her delicately rounded arms bare to the shoulder; nor with one hand stiffly bandaged and the other occupied in trying to keep her fluttering garment wrapped about her.

Bromwell, following, was scarcely less surprising: shirt-sleeved, mud-stained, bumpy-headed, with a curiously swathed infant in his arms.

A stout Teuton came next, laden with a dripping and miscellaneous assortment of the Bromwells' recent fashionable acquisitions, collected by a porter diligent for one whom he styled affectionately "the dollar gent."

Mrs. Overbeck had her arms around her daughter the next moment and was sobbing convulsively.

Mr. Overbeck grasped Bromwell's unoccupied hand, and pumped it up and down under the impression that he was quite cool; and that his remark: "Glad to see you. It's a fine day," was entirely adequate to the occasion.

He wheeled toward his wife so that Bromwell should not see a suspicious moisture that threatened his vision.

"For pity's sake, Maria!" he ejaculated gruffly, "don't make an exhibition of yourself! They're all right."

"It's p-pure h-happiness," sobbed Mrs. Overbeck, as Cecily disengaged herself, her own eyes wet, to hug her father. Then she hung back, her intention half-unfulfilled.

"Father!" she gasped, "you've had your beard shaved off!"

"It's your mother's doing," said Mr. Overbeck embarrassedly, but privately he thought he looked younger.

Mrs. Overbeck, Bromwell, and Billy were forming a compositely osculatory group.

"Oh, Jonas! Didn't I say he was a darling!" said Mrs. Overbeck, with true grandmotherly pride.

Mr. Overbeck stepped forward to inspect his grandson. It gave him a little thrill that this was Cecily's baby.

"Looks to me like a fine boy," he said, with an air of wishing to be an impartial judge. "I don't suppose you know who I

am, sir?" he demanded, chucking him awkwardly under the chin.

"Who is it, Billy?" said Bromwell un-hopefully, for alack, what availed those lessons from the round!

"Who is it, Pet?" implored Cecily. But her heart sank: those useless lessons from the flat!

"*Ja wohl*, who it iss?" demanded the German gentleman, who in the background had been sentimentally enjoying the reunion.

Billy Bromwell's eyes wandered complacently over the group. Their attentions pleased him. He regarded the elderly man in the foreground a bit dubiously; but there was his true friend, the German gentleman, directly back of him.

"Who it iss?" entreated the German gentleman once more, nodding coaxingly as he met Billy's eyes; and sure, here, at least, of his ground, the accommodating Billy hesitated no longer.

"Danpa!" he announced, and waited for applause.

If his glance went past Mr. Overbeck, that gentleman never noticed it.

"Well, what do you think of that!" he demanded of them all.

A pleased smile suffused his countenance. Bromwell, next the German gentleman, gave him a surreptitious nudge, and received a portentous wink in return. The German gentleman was distinctly a good sort.

"He wouldn't be his father's son, if he wasn't the brightest child alive," said Mrs. Bromwell, with a gayety that had its origin in the feeling that she must laugh at something.

"The pardonable partiality of a wife," Bromwell averred gracefully. "Mr. Overbeck, I want you to meet Mr. Schwartzheim of Chicago, a gentleman who has been a very good friend to us since the accident."

And hadn't he!

Mr. Overbeck grasped him genially by the hand, and Mr. Schwartzheim quite as genially grasped the hand extended.

"Proud to know you, sir," said Mr. Overbeck.

"Now, what we all need," he added

briskly, "is a good breakfast, and there's one waiting for us. I can get a better breakfast in my own house," he boasted, becoming quite normal again, "than in the best café I ever saw."

"Breakfast!" said Mrs. Bromwell gayly. "Ki-yi! Ki-yi!"

She waved her bandaged hand.

"Brekky!" shrieked Billy Bromwell approvingly.

"You'll join us?" Mr. Overbeck demanded of the German gentleman.

"Iff I to not intrude," said Mr. Schwartzheim, highly pleased.

"Intrude!" laughed Mrs. Bromwell. "Why, you're one of the family!"

Mr. Schwartzheim was threatened with apoplexy as he grasped—gradually, fortunately—the entire significance of this remark. "Oh, no! Billy never comes to the table," she assured her mother. "And *do* let his father carry him. He's *so* heavy."

"I shall carry the precious darling myself!" Mrs. Overbeck announced very firmly.

She headed the procession towards the waiting motor. Cecily and Bromwell followed, while the two elderly gentlemen brought up the rear.

"Vine family you haf," Mr. Schwartzheim observed genially.

"I'd like to see a finer!" said Mr. Overbeck defiantly. "I'm going to start a bank-account for that baby this morning with a cool twenty thousand; and by the time he grows up, he'll find his grandfather recognized *him* as the kind of a grandson to have! Of course, being Cecily's father, I can't say all I think *she* is, but there's Bromwell! Where will you find a finer fellow than he is, I'd like to know!"

Mr. Overbeck convinced himself that he had always thought so.

Bromwell, who had relieved Mr. Schwartzheim of their impedimenta, felt that he looked like nothing but a second-

hand dealer. Perhaps Mr. Overbeck's praise fell all the more soothingly on his ear.

"Dukes are all right if you want 'em!" Mr. Overbeck was replying to some remark of Mr. Schwartzheim's. "Attorney-at-law is a good enough title for *me*. Oh, I've nothing against the English. Except their calling a cracker a biscuit! That weakens your confidence in their judgment. But Bromwell's the sort of son-in-law that makes me think Cecily inherited my judgment about men."

Cecily turned a laughing face over her shoulder. "Mother's choice in men is good enough for me," she remarked demurely.

"Me, too?" said Bromwell, following suit. He was conscious that he had never before really appreciated Mr. Overbeck.

A wide, gratified smile appeared on the gentleman's face, and seeing it, Mr. Schwartzheim was moved to apply a pudgy thumb to one of the broad checks in Mr. Overbeck's coat which might reasonably be supposed to cover the region of a floating rib.

"Dot vos a goot von on you!" he remarked.

Cecily swung confidentially towards her husband.

"And we had counted on arriving in our yesterday's loveliness!" she whispered, with a little grimace.

"Didn't I tell you," Bromwell whispered quizzically in return, "that our appearance when we descended from the train would cause any millionaire to welcome us into his family with pride? And could you find a more difficult one? And didn't he?"

She shook her head mischievously.

"Give honor where honor is due!" she said gayly. "What saved us was not our appearance, but Mr. Schwartzheim's. And doesn't that prove the old adage that 'Appearances are—'?"

"*Necessary!*" said Bromwell firmly.

With a Little Help from Beulah

BY MARGARET BUSBEE SHIPP

FOR a man to glance at a Favrile vase filled with lilies-of-the-valley and shrug his shoulders with palpable annoyance, was unreasonable enough to attract the attention of the young woman who was entering the room.

"They are not favorites with you?" she asked, as she extended her slim hand in greeting.

"To-night I dislike the obvious perfection of them. Your room has found a nerve in me somewhere, and pinched it—hard."

She glanced about her at the low shelves filled with books, the few satisfying prints, the velvet tones of the Bokhara rug, the mahogany work-stand which had belonged to her great-grandmother, as had the quaint table with its pink-luster tea-set—and her eyes sought his for an explanation.

"I've been making a round of Christmas-calls—bundles for nieces and nephews and all that. Everywhere I have found wreaths of holly in the windows, red tissue-paper bells suspended from the chandeliers, holly over the portraits, and a poinsetta on the dining-room table. I like it," he ended defiantly. "It may be glaring and crude, but this room of yours needs red tissue! You've forgotten the season."

"I think not. Do you see that bowl of galax in the window, where all day the sunshine brings out the tints of its red-bronze leaves? And if I prefer to keep the feast with white bells of purity—" She glanced at the lilies-of-the-valley. "If a Christmas flower seems to me something very white and frail that a child might hold, why urge upon me flamboyant poinsettas?"

"You don't understand just what I'm quarreling with," he returned grimly. "Even that clear, modulated voice of yours, which generally soothes and stimulates me as a cup of tea does a reduced gentlewoman, is out of keeping with the

season. You aren't excited or hurried, or even tired and a bit 'on edge.' It might be the 13th of November."

He picked up an oblong package from the table beside him and handed it to her.

"I've brought you a Christmas present."

His expression was as malignant as was possible in so rugged and kindly a face.

"You've always given me violets. I felt so sure they would come that I left their particular vase empty. Generally, when I begin to untie the knot, I am cold with apprehension. In spite of one's gratitude for being remembered, you know the inharmonious gifts one receives, so totally out of keeping with one's environment. But with you, who know me so well—"

The last wrapping was off, and Galt's clock dazzled her with its gilded hideousness.

"'Actual gold-leaf,' the dealer guaranteed," said Galt pleasantly. "You should have heard him. 'The front two columns are Ionic and the back two Corinthic, and the statoo holding the clock proper is a carry—carry—' 'Nation?' I suggested. But he finally recalled it was a caryatid."

"Is it a joke?" stammered Miss Carroll, shaken from her composure.

"A joke?" he repeated with a puzzled air. "Don't you *like* it? I thought it would be the very thing for this room—a touch of color, you know. Suppose you put it over there on your desk?"

Repressing a shudder at the thought of writing under the supervision of the caryatid, Helen displaced a treasured bit of pottery to make room for it. As she thanked him conventionally, her voice held the sweet coldness that generally characterized it. The note of comradeship—impatience, blame, praise, somehow blended into sympathy that had

warmed its tones at times for him—was unmistakably absent now.

"Unless the clock has already imbibed your liberal ideas of time, it suggests that we should be starting. The tree is to be at eight."

"I wouldn't exchange my liberal ideas for your niggardly ones! Were you ever tardy in your life? To be always pulling poor Time by the forelock is a discourteous way to treat an elderly person. At the half-a-dozen homes I've visited this afternoon, inextricable confusion was the order of the day—packages being tied up, children cheerfully licking little Christmas seals and tags, everything in a rush as if Christmas had just been sprung on them that minute. I wager your express packages went ten days ago labeled 'To be opened Dec. 25th,' and that those to be delivered in town have been tied up a week."

The deepening color showed that his chance shot had struck home, but she had the faculty of being able to laugh at herself. She opened the drawer of her desk. It was full of beribboned packages.

"But we must take the next car," she gently urged. "I was at the Mission Chapel this morning, and promised to be there to-night."

"You've been dressing the tree?" he asked as he helped her on with her coat and furs.

"I had finished my Christmas preparations, as you scornfully suggested, and so I had the morning free."

"How do you do it?" he said, more to himself than to her as he followed her out of the door into the street. "You quiet, poised women do the work of the world. If there is someone needed to administer pellets to a parish invalid, to make the *mayonnaise* for the Woman's Club reception, to get up its literary program or to drive with its visiting celebrity, there is always the suggestion, 'Helen Carroll is the very one, and besides, she has nothing to do.'"

"People in general do not realize that literary work is—work," she expostulated smiling. "And my married friends naturally feel that their domestic claims leave them with less leisure than I have."

"Yet how many of them keep a home

like your little apartment, with everything so dainty and restful and exquisite? How many of them could take a raw Irish girl like your Maggie, and through some wonderful alembic transform her into an efficient, trained servant? How many of them can entertain as you entertain, with just enough perfectly appointed courses to tempt the appetite without surfeiting it, and just enough people to give variety and yet not to forego a pleasant sense of intimacy?"

"That's the way you always do," she interrupted. "You abuse me until I accept it, and then you denounce me for my low opinion of myself. A moment ago you were taunting me with my punctual habits. It's the sign patent of an old maid, and I'm sensitive."

"Don't be!" he said with sudden harshness. "Eight years ago you said you wanted to be an old maid because it was a character for which you were fitted—and that so few women played the part adequately. Bitterness or envy or regretful retrospect, you announced with the philosophy of your twenty Summers, spoiled a rôle which sweetness of temper and largeness of spirit could make a woman's broadest sphere. I combatted your position, you may remember? Now I retract. It is a difficult part to play adequately, gracefully, charmingly, and I congratulate you on the perfection of your achievement."

"I, too, have changed in eight years. I no longer philosophize. But I still can quote appreciatively the spinster who declared: 'Being an old maid is like death by drowning—perfectly delightful after you quit struggling.'"

Galt held up his hand to stop the car which had finally overtaken them; and it sped them on to the mill-district. As is the custom in many Southern towns of moderate size, the mills were on the outskirts, just beyond the city limits. Several of the churches had established mission chapels and parish houses, and it was into one of these Miss Carroll turned.

The room was crowded with eager children and their relatives. They were just beginning the Christmas carol.

"O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!"

Then the folding doors were drawn back, and the tree glittered and glimmered before their happy eyes. To some of them it was the first Christmas-tree that had ever amazed and gladdened them.

Miss Carroll touched Galt to attract his attention.

"Look at Beulah Hoyt, the child just in front of you. Did you ever see such glistening eyes in such a peaked little face?"

"Nineteen — twenty — twenty-one," Beulah was murmuring.

"Twenty-one what, honey?" her mother asked.

"Dolls!" Beulah breathed the ecstatic monosyllable.

"Everyone of 'em dressed!" she went on. "They got on underclothes and they petticoats is all trimmed. I want mine to have blue eyes and yaller hair rale curly hair. I wish I'd git that one there with the blue slippers. Aint she lovely? Oh, me, they're takin' her down! Jemima Stuttle, she got it. Warn't it a grand one? I hope I'll git that one with the pink sash. Is her eyes blue, mammy? I can't see from here. They're givin' it to Sally. I don't keer, 'cause mebbe its eyes was brown. Oh, mammy, *look* at that doll high up, on that branch near the star! She's dressed like a baby, like a teeny, weeny baby! She's got on a cap, and aint she pretty? I'd ruther have that than any; I b'lieve Miss Hattie muster got her for me. I'm goin' to name her Ruthie, it's sech a stylish name. They're takin' another doll off the tree, but she aint as pretty as my Ruthie!"

Galt, turning to smile sympathetically at his companion, was surprised to see her leaning tensely forward, her eyes fixed on "Ruthie" almost as eagerly as were those of the small person in front of them. Santa Claus, in this case a plump martyr, who through cotton batting and perspiration was laying up treasures in heaven, at this moment took down the delectable doll, and turned the card over to find the owner's name.

Beulah clasped and unclasped her nervous little fingers.

"Mamie Bowes."

Mamie tripped up, caught the doll

carelessly by one arm, tripped to her seat again, and immediately began to eat from her bag of candy. A choking gulp came from the child in front.

"Beulah Hoyt," called out Santa.

There was not a doll left, and with leaden feet Beulah went to the tree, took the package handed her, made a stiff little bow, and came back to her mother.

"What did ye get, honey?"

"A game of Ole Maid," replied Beulah listlessly.

Abruptly Miss Carroll arose, and Galt followed.

"We want the down-town car. Shall we stop at Rinter's or the Toy Bazaar?" asked Galt when they were outside.

"Rinter's, I think. It is nice, for you to know that I'm going to find a doll. 'A friend is someone who can finish your sentences'—but sometimes I don't have to begin mine for you to understand."

"I've never been in the Christmas Eve crowd before," said Helen a little later, as they waited their turn at the doll-counter. "What a jolly, tolerant crowd it is!"

The stock being depleted, it was impossible to find a pretty doll dressed as a baby and Helen wanted one as much as possible like the lost Ruthie. But there was a lovely bride, who could open and shut her blue eyes, and who, when properly pressed, could say "Mamma!" though it is difficult to conceive of what use her limited vocabulary would be in the marriage ceremony.

As Galt insisted upon buying the doll, Miss Carroll went over to the ready-to-wear department, and selected a pretty, warm shirt-waist so that the little mother, who had shared Beulah's disappointment, might have a personal part in the Christmas surprise.

When they reached Miss Carroll's apartment again, Maggie brought a florist's box which had been left, and as Helen took out the great bunch of violets and placed them in their particular vase, she appealed impulsively,

"Please explain that dreadful clock! It *was* a joke?"

"It's for Maggie, of course," he admitted. "But first, I wanted to see the effect of something inharmonious—if I

may use your word—something alien in your surroundings, something *not you*. Everything in this room is so permeated with your personality."

"You have said it was a 'haven,'" she interposed, still puzzled.

"Yes, but not at Christmas. To-night it seemed to me less beautiful, somehow, less complete in its very completeness than the happy disorder of the homes I had just quitted."

She glanced up quickly with her rarely exquisite smile.

"Very well. Make it disorderly. Take one of my pink-luster saucers and use it for a cigar-tray."

"I shall avail myself promptly of the permission. I've been vainly asking for it ever since you established yourself in these quarters. Why are you so suddenly gracious?"

"Probably because I'm very busy over this dress," she evaded, "and I know a cigar will keep you amiable and entertained, without any effort from me."

He leaned back in his chair, lazily watching the rings of smoke or the swift, white fingers as they busied themselves over the new Ruthie. An insertion of lace lengthened the bride's petticoat; the *valenciennes* yoke and sleeves did quite as well for a baby-dress as for a bride's, in doll fashions, so that all Miss Carroll had to do was to fashion the flowing white skirt, and from a bit of organdie and ribbon to concoct a charming cap. When the last stitches were put in, Galt, so quick to detect any change in her face, saw that her lips were quivering ever so slightly.

"What is it, Helen?" he demanded, flinging away his second cigar, and bending towards her. "You look as if there is a source from which tears might spring."

"I am so glad Beulah was wise enough to know what she wanted! Somehow, to-night I am thinking of the little girl I knew best of all. She had never had a doll before she was ten, and naturally, not afterwards. From my motherless baby-days my joy was to be with father,

and he used to say that instead of dolls, toys, or mechanical devices for amusement, he turned over a new page in the book of Nature. To be the daily companion of a scientist makes a wonderful childhood; he taught me about flowers, and birds and butterflies; at the sea-coast, what a magical world he showed me through his lenses! But it was a lonely world, with no little girl play-fellows. Father taught me to gain self-control, and to find many interests. I learned many lessons necessary for a boy—or for a woman who wanted to play Old Maid."

"But Beulah's choice was wiser?" he demanded, something intangible about her, a touch of wistfulness, of uncertainty, making his pulses throb with swift exultation. "May I tell you what I've been thinking as I sat here watching you? That this was the way it might have been if years ago you had not—not philosophized. Only I should have been the one to help you dress a tree to-day, and the doll might have been—"

Not since her first girlhood had such a warm, sweet blush dyed her cheeks. Galt put an impetuous hand over hers—and knocked over the pink-luster saucer! Instead of the decent dismay he should have shown, his voice fairly rose in triumph.

"I didn't *mean* to, of course, but it's an omen! Don't you see, Helen, you never again can boast that your set is intact? It was a fatal lapse to let me use it. You are beginning to play Old Maid badly."

"I—I think perhaps I am," she admitted.

The dullest observer would have drawn the same conclusion if he could have entered presently into a room where a doll stared with unblinking eyes at a radiant-faced man in whose arms a woman was crying softly, while a gilded clock, pointing its disregarded hands to five minutes past twelve, showed that already it was Christmas-morning and that all was well.



"Just back from the wedding," he said pleasantly

Honor at Pawn

BY WILLIAM GILMORE BEYMER

Author of "The Man Who Ran," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY CH. WEBER-DITZLER

I PICKED up the ominous envelope, and slowly, heavily retraced my steps; Seraphina heard my approach and met me at the door of our apartment.

"What is it?" she queried anxiously.

"Only another one," I said calmly, in what I knew to be my most resigned tone.

"Another story rejected! My poor dear! It can't be that they have returned 'Okeff?'"

"Look at it!" I said sternly. "Does this look like a returned manuscript? And you the wife of a lit'r'y man lo! these eight months—shame!"

I sat down on the window-seat and stared at the envelope—not a long, yellow, manila envelope addressed to myself, but the creamy, opulent, portentous envelope of conventional invitation. Seraphina sat opposite me in my leather seated armchair, the tips of her slippers

just touching the envelope that had fallen to the floor and lay there, between us. We stared at it until it seemed to grow and expand into the proportions of a sepulcher.

"Oh! you haven't opened it!"

"That would not affect the inevitable."

"It might be only a 'come-to-the-church.'"

"We get so many of that kind—"

I tried to speak kindly, but she gave no heed, for she had stooped swiftly, picked it up, and ripped open the envelope.

"Why it's Elinore!" she cried delightedly.

"Thank Heaven!" I muttered. I added meekly, "I was only thinking how pleasant it is that this is one of *our* friends."

"That is unkind; I never said a word about Mr. Oldings nor even Grand-aunt Selena."

Now my Grand-aunt Selena had been a bitter blow; at sixty-eight she had married for the third time, and my position as her favorite and hitherto favored nephew demanded that I should come through with something handsome to shine among the wedding-gifts. Oldings had been my room-mate at the university, though my wife never met him. Could I have done less therefore than the art-picture, especially after his seven branch silver candelabra to us six months before?

Still it had gone hard. For Seraphina and I had agreed that all our house-furnishings must be good and that we would buy one piece at a time, if need be, so only that it was of a real quality. No antiques, mind you; just good, harmonious furniture. The trouble was, that instead of gayly expending upon furnishings the proceeds of a short story—and as anyone knows who lives by the fountain-pen, those on the lowermost rungs of the ladder of literary fame are not paid exorbitantly—we paid the rent and the b., the b., and the c-m. (an awfully expensive trinity), and clothed ourselves against Comstock and the blasts of the Winter-wind; and what was left, if any, went into the furniture-fund. So it was with pain that seven times in eight months we had seen the fund devastated

at the drop of an opulent, ominous envelope into our letter-box. Aunt Selena had got our Morris chair—only in the shape of a silver water-pitcher; the Oldings, away down in Tennessee, were, I hope, happy with an "exquisite copy" of Corregio's "Nativity," which was the ghost of our almost-attained reading-lamp. From the others we had escaped more easily, separately; collectively they had set us back about a library-table. And now, with a long coveted, long selected china-closet, that very day marked down to within the reach of the furniture-fund, and with this total in my very pocket and myself on the way down-stairs to the buying of the china-closet, there had come the summons to further sacrifice.

There had been a long silence; evidently we had not been thinking telepathetically, for Seraphina exclaimed "Gracious! Suppose—suppose we had bought that china-closet—wouldn't that have been awful!"

"Huh?" I said, amazed. I had been improvidently thinking, only suppose that we had.

"Because we would now be—'busted'—I believe you call it?"

"Yes, that's the word," I murmured—it had a familiar ring—"busted"—"and could not therefore have sent anything!"

"You are right, Seraphina," I confessed, "and, of course, we want to send Elinore something pretty nifty."

"Nifty? I have heard that before. When I recall thirty-five dollar Aunt Selena, and eighteen dollar Mr. Oldings, I do not like that word 'nifty,'" said my wife. "I tell you what to do: we will strike an average on the whole lot, and then stick to that. Let me see: Aunt Selena, 35; Mr. Oldings, 18; Marjory, 5; John Walker, 3½; your cousin Walter, 11—How much is that? 72½?—6 for the Grays, and 5.50 for the Jennings—84; seven in eighty-four, 12 times—\$12.00 for Elinore's present; that is about all we can afford, and yet it will get something very nice."

And so we agreed to stick to \$12.00.

But we did not spend twelve. We went down-town next day, and our road lay past the shop of the china-closet. Oh,

Fate! There in the window was our china-closet, still unsold, and with the reduced price-mark still on it. Somehow nothing suited that day; all the first choices were over twelve, the others unsuitable, and we came home empty handed. Dissatisfaction circled round our heads and perched upon our shoulders.

The time drew nearer.

"It isn't decent to wait another day," Seraphina complained bitterly; but the china-closet remained in the window and that night we brought home only the umbrella with which we had started out.

"And remember," I said severely, "we have to allow time for our \$12.00 present to travel four hundred miles!"

That evening there came to call one Jerome Norton, an artist. Oh, Fate! He bore with him a walking-stick of such curious carving, such exquisite ivory inlay, and such an air of old time aristocracy that my wife and I no sooner cast eyes upon it, than we plied him with questions. He volunteered the price paid; it staggered us. It was infinitesimal to the obvious value.

"And, moreover, I'll tell you where I got it—though I don't want the place generally known, for that would spoil it," he said. "Everything—Old Curiosity Shop, it is called," he went on, "and so it is; great place for buying quaint birthday-gifts, wedding-presents—rarities and oddities—modern things, too—"

But by that time we had ceased to hear. We had swallowed the lure of the price of the walking-stick, and we were caught fast.

We found the place without difficulty—the finding was easy; the difficulty was in bringing ourselves to enter it.

"You knew before you came here, Seraphina, that it was not Fifth Avenue," I said severely.

"Suppose they should ever find out," was all that she answered me.

"Nonsense! How could they? You go home and I'll buy the present."

After one glance at the dust colored windows, behind which the contents of the "Old Curiosity Shop" seemed to have sunk down in hopeless, grimy heaps, we walked swiftly on lest the passer-by suspect us of intention to enter.

"Let you buy the present?" mused Seraphina. "Um-m! Give me all, but \$12.05 of your money," grimly.

"Why the five cents?"

"Carfare."

"Make it \$11.95; maybe I can scrooge him down a nickel," I jeered. "But this is cruel distrust; why am I to be relieved of my odd dollar forty?"

"I do not trust you, William. Remember 'The Waterloo!'"

I did.

We called Aunt Selena's pitcher "The Waterloo," because twenty dollars had been our limit, and in an evil moment I had been fascinated by the pitcher and had made it mine for thirty-five.

I said no more.

"After all," said Seraphina, "since we are down here we might as well look at your 'Old Curiosity Shop.'"

We began to hurry back along the block and a half we had come; but Seraphina dragged slower and slower as we drew nearer.

She needed heartening, so I began:

"Tho' the oyster's shell is tough,
And 'e's slimy right enough,
Little girl;
Don't you speak too 'arsh of 'im,
Looking 'omely aint no sin—
It's inside 'im is the pearl—"

"The pearl, the pearl," I quoted vehemently.

Then, ere her resolve could weaken, we had swept into the shop like a cavalry-charge. We went forward a few paces into the gloomy interior, and then stopped uncertainly; I felt Seraphina's hand grope for mine and then clutch it nervously.

It was an eery place. The contents of the shop seemed to have suddenly swollen and bulged out over the edges of the shelves, the counters, and the show-cases. I never saw any place so full—spinning wheel and a very up to date sewing-machine stood side by side separated only by an articulated skeleton hanging from an upright iron rod, mounted in a wooden standard; the skeleton's left arm was gone at the shoulder, but he grinned cheerfully nevertheless. A bass-drum, with one head jaggedly broken stood just to the left, and behind a monstrous

wooden horse, that might have been the original horse of Troy—at least, in that shop, it seemed to be of such colossal size; probably it was only one of those horses affected by harness-makers as a sort of lay figure. Things dangled from the low, raftered ceiling; a cork leg, toes forward, swung just clear of our heads; an old civil war musket hung muzzle down; a rope of sleigh-bells jingled faintly. Over the shelf there poured a stationary cascade of harness, fish-nets, fringed and crocheted shawls, a festoon of logging chain, and a collection of dog-collars tied in one bunch and swinging at one end of a long string.

It gave me some trouble to make out this last item, and I had just triumphantly settled it in my mind when Mr. August Schmitt came from behind a little enclosure, which seemed to be the *sanctum sanctorum*, or perhaps the repair-shop for the multitude of watches that hung in rows along the wall behind and gave out a fierce, subdued ticking.

Mr. Schmitt saw fit to retain in his left eye the funnel shaped spy-glass, used by jewelers to detect indigestion in watches' interiors, and he never removed it during all his subsequent vigorous movements. I think his other eye was blind, for it stared straight ahead immovably, and when left accidentally directed at me, was very disconcerting.

"Vell?" he asked politely.

"We have come," I said, "to select a wedding-gift for a friend." Then I explained in my most engaging manner that we wanted "something a little odd, a little quaint; some one of those rarities for which your shop is noted."

"Chess?" he said, absolutely unimpressed. "Choolery?" he questioned; "something nice in guff-buddons, broochez?"

"Nothing like that," I explained; "it's for a wedding-present—something a little quaint."

"A-a-hhh!"

And we followed him to a shelf from which he lifted down in triumph an enormous stein covered with gayly painted bas-reliefs.

"Guvaint!" he exulted. "Ant cheap, very cheap!"

He tried to sell us some terrible oil paintings in glittering frames; a porcelain atrocity whose very use I could not even guess; a pair of brass andirons, and, at last, a silver water-pitcher—he was never nearer death than at that moment.

Seraphina became almost hysterical with suppressed laughter and had to have a glass of water. I would have taken the andirons in desperation had Seraphina not held me back. I don't know why we stayed, but we almost clung to Mr. Schmitt, as to a sort of forlorn hope.

Mr. Schmitt was becoming sulky.

"You dont vant nodings guvaint; you wants moderns," he growled.

"You're right!" I said. "I remember now. She hates quaint things; shew us something up to date."

"Cud-glass," he dictated, and we followed meekly to a showcase in the front of the store. "Fine bowl," he affirmed, "worth \$15.00. I sell dot for \$5.00—four-fifty if you take dis von," giving us to understand that his time was valuable, if ours was not.

Now, I know something of cut-glass, and so does Seraphina; we stared at each other incredulously. It was worth \$12.00 anyway.

"You pack it?" I asked, to cover my eagerness.

"Sure," he said. "Sammy! Run by der grocer's und gid a starch-boxz."

"Oh, but we can't have advertising on it," cried Seraphina. "It must be packed in a perfectly plain box just like the up-town stores, you know."

"Now—now! Id vill loog as if id game from Trivanies' when I haf done mit id," he said petulantly.

In short he knocked the box apart, hammered the nails out of the board ends, turned the red, green, and blue lettering of the starch company inside, nailed up the box again, packed in our bowl, nailed down the lid, and handed the rather ragged box with the assurance:

"Dot boxz vill garry savely to China; I guarantees dot packing."

We took the box and went out.

Lot's wife looked back and became salt; my wife looked back and became tears.



Now, I know something of cut-glass and so does Seraphina. It was worth \$12.00 anyway

"Unredeemed pledges?" she read wonderingly. "Pawn-tickets bought!"

"Where!" I said startled.

It was true; right under the tarnished gilt letters "Old Curiosity Shop."

Seraphina clutched my arm and burst into tears.

"It's a pawn-shop," she wept. "Let's take the box back and get our money. Oh! suppose Elinore should ever know."

"It is not a pawn-shop," I expostulated. "Don't you see, there aren't any three gold balls?"

Then I hardened my heart, though it misgave me, and quickened my steps to the nearest express-office.

"The value?"

"Twelve dollars," I declared defiantly.

"Packed well?"

"Yes, certainly. Would carry to China."

Seraphina started guiltily at the words; we slunk out without looking at each other.

And all the way home I endeavored to explain the difference between a pawn-shop and a shop that buys unredeemed pawn-tickets, and old-curiosity shops and antique-stores, and a number of other things of which I was in no way as confident as my words sounded.

Well, we bought the china-closet. Of course we bought the china-closet. We knew that by doing so, we would have to sail close to the wind till the next story should sell, but since we had stumbled upon such a bargain of a wedding-gift, and thereby saved so much, it was manifestly the intention of Providence that we buy that highly superior china-closet at the reduced price before someone else should buy it. And so—without saying much about it to each other, we had gone together to the store, and had made the china-closet ours that very afternoon.

And that evening we sat and looked at the empty space so soon to be filled by the paragon of china-closets, and smiled at each other. And what, with the consciousness of having bought a wedding-present whose appearance was all that could be desired, for a price that was most desirable; and what with obtaining the desire of our hearts, the bar-

gain sale china-closet, all in the same day, I became what I believe is termed "mellow;" and I wrote a letter to Elinore.

Oh Fate! It was something of a triumph of a letter: a little playful and bantering, a little jovial; just a touch of sadness for the days when we were all playmates together, the days that were gone for aye—there was a quotation of Tennyson's somewhere about this point—and then I got upon the subject of the wedding, and of our regret at not being able to be present, but that we had sent to represent us, *etc., etc.*—with a bad pun or two along in here—and how I wished that I might say something poetic about bowls but could only wish that like the Miraculous Pitcher, the bowl of Herbert and Elinore might always be filled.

And this last I considered a very pretty thought—and so did Seraphina, to whom I read the letter. Then, prompted by some hitherto unsuspected streak of imbecility, I added, apropos of nothing, that if the bowl were damaged we should be told of it, for the packing was, of course, guaranteed.

And I sent that letter.

Oh, Fate!

The next day the china-closet arrived and was installed in the vacant space that had cried aloud for a china-closet for so long a time; and I wiped all the cut-glass and the best china for Seraphina, and we arranged and rearranged them on the polished shelves, and Seraphina planned a little dinner for the Hazzards'—who had no china-closet, but had long wanted one—and we were happy.

The reading of the evening-paper is a period of liberal education for Seraphina; some of her questions about politics, current events, past history, the meaning of unfamiliar terms, and what not, are frightfully puzzling, but I never admit it.

So I was relieved when she asked me that evening what was a "fence," and I was able to explain very glibly that "fence" is a term employed by criminals for a place where they can dispose of their stolen goods; in short, an illegitimate pawn-shop. Then I went on to unfold, that they sell the pawn-tickets, and

the man who buys them pays to the broker the price loaned on the article, plus the amount of interest, and then becomes the possessor of the unredeemed pledge—that is, the article pawned.

"Do you understand, dear?"

"Oh, yes," answered Seraphina. "Yes, I understand."

There was a slaty-gray tone and quality to her voice which somehow made me uncomfortable.

"I understand now," she said presently. "I understand that we have given Elinore a cut-glass bowl that was probably stolen."

"Oh goodness, no!" I said weakly.

"Oh, no, nothing like that."

"And why?"

"Well, burglars do not steal cut-glass much."

She rustled the paper at me.

"It says here that they carried away all the silver and most of the cut-glass. Oh, I know that Elinore will in some way find it out."

A tear quivered on her eyelashes, elongated itself, and finally broke and ran down her cheek. Then there was trouble enough for one day.

But the next morning we got a little bit more. It came as a note from Elinore. It had been written the day before her wedding, and Seraphina suggested, in palliation, that, of course, Elinore must have been all wrought up with excitement. If Elinore was all wrought up with excitement there was more of it showing in her very dispassionate note, on the last page of which she thanked us for the "beautiful"—underscored five times—"cut-glass bowl." She just couldn't tell us how much she thanked us, and she didn't try.

"She has found out," Seraphina said with a quaver. "Oh, what shall we do?"

"Nonsense!" I blustered. "She didn't like the bowl. Anyway, how could she find out? It might have come from Tiffany's, for all she knew."

"Tiffany's! Packed in a starch-box! Perhaps that man even put his advertisement in the box. Imagine 'From August Schmitt—Ola Curiosity Shop, Unredeemed Pledges—166 Second Avenue.'"

Seraphina's scorn was scathing, un-

answerable, until suddenly she broke down, left the breakfast-table, and went into her room, banging the door.

I squirmed in my chair, and the china-closet sparkled and glittered in glassy amusement.

"You are a veneered old white elephant," I said reflectively, "and with all your polish you had to be reduced in price before we would buy y'—I wish we never had."

After which outburst of puerile wit, I went for a long walk.

Seraphina was awaiting with impatience my return; she flung her arms round my neck and kissed me and patted my back and danced on my feet, crying all the time:

"They didn't find out; they never even guessed. It was only broken! Oh! I'm so glad—so glad, and so relieved."

Then she began to dance again.

"How do you know?" I challenged, when I got my breath.

She waved a bird's-egg-blue sheet of note-paper.

"This came after you left," she explained. "Come and sit with me on the window-seat and I'll read it to you. Oh I'm so happy."

Then she read:

Herbert and I have talked it over, and he says that it is only right that you should know that the beautiful bowl was broken all to pieces. And since the packing was guaranteed the dealer is responsible and will, of course, make it good. I am so glad, Seraphina, dear, for it nearly broke my heart to lose that beautiful bowl!

"Now," said Seraphina, "you must get another bowl from that man and we will pack it ourselves in a plain wooden box and they will never know—"

"What's the matter, dear? You do not seem pleased?"

"I'm not," I said.

"He did guarantee the packing, didn't he? We'll get another bowl, will we not?" Seraphina asked anxiously.

"Oh, he guaranteed the packing all right, but as to giving us another bowl—that's different."

"Well, I don't care," Seraphina said defiantly. "We will send another bowl from some *good* place—"

She stopped. I had waved my hand eloquently toward the china-closet.

There was a dismal silence; I arose stiffly and said:

"I had best go now and see what he will do about it."

Mr. Schmitt did not keep me long in doubt.

"You haf bad newz for *me*?" he repeated.

I had assumed an easy confidence I did not feel.

He got up from his knees—he was varnishing the wooden horse—and said:

"Dot bowl, dot cud-glass bowl, was busted? Ah, dot is bad newz for *me*! Why?"

"You guaranteed the packing," I said stoutly.

"Guaranteeet?" He was genuinely shocked. "Me?" Smiting his breast. "Guaranteeet? Young man," he shook as if I had accused him of apostacy, "I haf never in my life guaranteeet anydink."

I lost my temper.

"You most assuredly did guarantee that that box would 'carry safely to China'—those are your words."

He was urbane again.

"Vell," he said briskly, "dit you sent it there? No? Then I can nod be responsible, if I said 'China.'"

I am glad Seraphina was not with me—I swore. We continued in the same vein until the conversation ended at the door, out of which I backed, being menaced with the varnish-brush.

Seraphina met me excitedly at the head of the stairs of our apartment.

"Did you get it?" she asked anxiously.

"I did not," I answered with asperity.

"Well, it's all right; the express-company is going to pay for it. Herbert—that's Elinore's husband—wrote you a letter and he says—I opened it—I couldn't wait—it's all right, isn't it?—and *he* says that, as he considers the express-company to blame because the bowl was so well packed, it shouldn't have broken; that you probably will not get damages from the dealer—he said so—and so, he says, he took the liberty of complaining to the express-agent and that a man would call and fix it with you; and the man has come, he's waiting

to see you in the back room now. Isn't that fine?"

The man proved very brisk and businesslike, not to say snappy; but we got along very well with questions and answers until he came to the value.

"You declared twelve dollars?" he asked.

"Yes," uncomfortably.

"Pay twelve for it?" He looked at me sharply.

The meshes of the net of our guilt were tightening; inspiration and evasion both failed me.

"Yes!" I said sullenly, while I pitied myself.

He snapped shut his book; "That's all. Oh! Where did you buy the bowl?" and he opened the book again.

This was goading the jaded victim too far.

"Confound it," I roared, "do you want the name of the grandmother of the clerk who sold it to me? I have told you what I paid for it; what more do you want?"

"Yes, yes;" the man retreated toward the door, and I followed him truculently. "It's all right," he explained, "it's just one of the questions. All you'll have to do will be to come round to the office in a day or so and show the bill of sale, or make affidavit to the value; you'll git yer money, sir."

He backed out into the hall and I shut the door savagely.

"Isn't that lovely," said Seraphina sweetly. "What is an affidavit—it sounds like something legal."

"It is," I spoke grimly. "It means that I've got to take oath that we paid \$12 for that thing, or else admit that I lied and gave false valuation in the first place. If I perjure myself and take their money, I'm liable to the penitentiary; if I don't they'll want to know what it did cost, and the \$4.50 will be reported back in their correspondence with Herbert what's-his-name, who wont have to guess often to surmise that no cut-glass bowl of that size could have been reputably bought for four and a half."

Just then our door bell rang. It was John Chappel, Elinore's brother, who lives in New York, but whom we seldom see as he is such a busy man. My breast



We sat silent for a long time

sank; this unusual visit had "bowl" writ large all over it.

"Just back from the wedding," he said pleasantly, when he had seated himself. "Elinore asked me to come and see you two as soon as possible, and tell you all about it."

We chatted pleasantly for some time, Seraphina and I deftly guiding him away from any thought of gifts.

"She received a great many—"

"Oh," cried Seraphina desperately, "I must hear all about what the bridesmaids wore—no excuses from you—you must remember, at least, the colors!"

He did his best, but I could not blame him for so soon becoming exhausted on that subject; and in the momentary pause that followed, Seraphina passed him a plate of little cakes and inquired if he would have one lump of sugar or two in his tea.

"Two, please—Elinore was greatly grieved at—"

Seraphina was passing me the plate of cakes and I deliberately dropped it.

"Oh!" cried Seraphina. "Oh!" she was genuinely vexed. "That was the plate your Aunt Selena gave me!" Then catching the motive for the deed, she mastered her tears and talked long and fast about Aunt Selena, her famous china, and her recent marriage, till at last we plucked up hope from seeing John Chappel reach for his hat.

Then an awful thing happened. Seraphina's instinct for order prompted her to gather together the broken china and the clattering, tinkling bits cried aloud for revenge. They served as a reminder.

"Oh! I nearly forgot," said John Chappel.

The sacrifice had been in vain; nothing would stop him.

"Go on," I thought, bracing myself, "I'm a desperate man."

"Elinore told me to offer my services in case you had any difficulty making your dealer replace that beautiful broken bowl. Have you seen him?"

"Yes," I said, warily. "He quite declined to make good. It's a small matter. We will send another."

"Nothing of the sort," he protested. "Any reputable dealer should replace it. It was abominably packed—think of it—in a starch-box."

"The idea!" gasped Seraphina.

"Where did you get it?"

I knew that question was coming, and I trusted Seraphina to follow my lead.

"At a shop recommended by a friend of mine—what was the name, dear?"

"I don't remember," said Seraphina.

"Of course I remember where," I said hastily, noting the look.

"Oh, of course," his face clearing. "Well then, we'll just go down together and make them see reason," he said, in his big, pleasant voice. "They guaranteed it, and I wont see you get stuck for so handsome a gift."

"And I will not see you take your valuable time for so trivial a matter," I fenced warmly.

"Nonsense!" Then ignoring my protests: "Now, did you see some clerk or the head of the firm?"

"The head."

He seemed surprised.

"And he would not replace it? Well, of course we wont make it a legal matter, but, since I am a lawyer, I believe I can perhaps put the case more forcibly than you could. When can you go?"

He took it for granted that I was going.

"To-day is Thursday. I can go a week from to-morrow," I said helplessly.

"Good! Until then, good-afternoon!" and he left Seraphina and me staring miserably at each other.

"You aren't going—you aren't going to take him *there*!" she said in horror.

"Alas, sweet wife, my honor is at pawn. And but my going—nothing can redeem it? But no—I can't take him *there*."

"Then what will you do?"

"I think I'll be dead by then," I said.

"If we only could send another."

"We can't; we're stone broke. Oh! If only I could get the editor to decide on that story; next Wednesday is the monthly pay-day," I mused.

Seraphina quietly stole to the mantel-shelf and returned with a long manila envelope in her hand.

"This came with Elinore's husband's letter—I forgot to tell you," she confessed.

It was my story.

The accompanying letter from the editor said that I had fallen far short of my standard; they had hoped for something much better from me. What they wanted was humor—or humor and pathos blended as I had done it in "The Price of Paradise." They needed a story of that sort at once. They hoped that I had something similar; if not—could I—

We sat silent for a long time in the deepening dusk; my wife put her arm round my neck and patted my cheek with her hand.

"Seraphina," I said, "we are going to make a clean breast of it to Elinore and her people—tell it all—china-closet—whole thing. If they can be made to laugh, we are saved. And we are going to send Elinore a \$12.00 cut-glass bowl from Tiffany's and it will have Tiffany in nine places on the box. I'm going to write that story—that humor—our story, and it will be pathetic, too—between the lines. We need the money, Seraphina, and I wont fall down."

This is the clean breast. *This* is the story—china-closet and all. And should you ever read it, you will know that an express-company rampant, and John Chappel, and a huge, wooden horse, and a china-closet, no longer haunt my dreams, and that Seraphina and I are at peace.

Also you will know that Elinore has received a carbon copy of the manuscript of this story—the pleading of our case; and, in a plain wooden box, a twelve dollar cut-glass bowl.

What the Colonel Wanted

BY UNA HUDSON

IT was when he decided that Agatha Fordyce was the only girl in the world that Harold Warburton took his uncle to call.

As we don't believe in bestowing credit where no credit is due we will say right here that Harold acted from an entirely selfish motive.

The Fordyce's apartment was a tiny one, and its acoustic properties were unusually good. If Mrs. Fordyce, so Harold reasoned, were entertaining his uncle in the vicinity of the bay-window she would be not nearly so likely to overhear what was going on at the piano, under cover of the music, as she would if left to her own devices.

The Colonel, to do him full justice, accompanied Harold most unwillingly. He was a bachelor of settled ways and fixed habits, and he thought it a hardship to be dragged from his own comfortable fireside to spend the evening talking to a woman for whom he probably wouldn't care two straws.

"Harold," he said, "is it really necessary for me to go?"

His glance shifted from the young man's clean-cut countenance to his own morocco slipped feet.

Now look here, uncle," his nephew reproved, "it's not right for you to stop in all the time—every evening. Why, you'll rust; you'll disintegrate; you'll crumble. How many men in the world are there, do you think, who would pause, not to say haggle over accepting an invitation to call upon a very charming woman?"

His uncle did not attempt to say.

Harold, reverting to his original motive was loath to permit his quarry to elude him.

"Besides," the illusionary young man insisted, "you ought to go. I should have no friends that you do not know and the Fordyces are—are very good friends."

To be sure, the Colonel contemplated, that put the matter in quite a different light.

He went, therefore, as a matter of duty. Harold was his only nephew and he felt, in a way, responsible for the boy. It might be just as well, he decided, to look into this newly formed friendship.

Being a person of unprejudiced mind, the Colonel soon admitted that the Fordyce ladies were not only entirely unobjectionable but even very attractive.

He smiled indulgently on Agatha, who was slender and fair-haired and pretty—just the type to attract a person of Harold's temperament. And he gave his best attention to Mrs. Fordyce, who was less slender than her daughter and not so pretty, but quite as charming.

She was sewing lace on some lengths of cambric and the Colonel nodded approvingly. He thought women should be domestic in their tastes.

Later in the evening she rolled up her cambric and lace and with a word of apology to the Colonel left the room.

When she came back she carried a tray on which were some tall glasses of a fruit-lemonade and a plate of cake.

The Colonel accepted the lemonade, but he looked doubtfully at the cake. He was the unfortunate victim of a particularly distressing indigestion and he feared the consequences of an unwonted indulgence.

"It's home-made and very simple," Mrs. Fordyce encouraged him.

And the Colonel yielded.

It was also, he found, very good, and what was even more to the point, entirely devoid of uncomfortable after effects.

When Harold finally indicated that he was ready to go, the Colonel pressed Mrs. Fordyce's hand warmly and spoke glowingly of the pleasure his call had afforded him.

Moreover, he did not hesitate in telling his nephew that he had experienced a most agreeable disappointment, as he put it. Indeed, on the way home, he waxed positively enthusiastic. How much was due to the visit and how much to the lack of after effects from eating the cake the young man, however, could not quite decide.

He required no urging at all when Harold again suggested a visit to Mrs. and Miss Fordyce, and it wasn't very long before he himself was unblushingly taking the initiative.

Twice he was asked to dinner with Harold, and it was those perfectly cooked and daintily served little dinners that first turned the Colonel's thoughts toward matrimony.

The Colonel had never considered himself a marrying man. Indeed, until he fell a prey to indigestion, he had been quite contented with his bachelor estate.

Now it occurred to him that a matrimonial alliance with Mrs. Fordyce might be to their mutual advantage. Her income, he knew, was a very slender one. He was in a position to give her all the luxuries that most appeal to the feminine nature; and, in return, he would ask only that she keep at bay this malady that so racked and worried him.

Certainly they were both of them old enough and, he trusted, sensible enough to cast aside all sentiment and see clearly the material advantages of such a union.

The Colonel's mind once made up, he lost no time in bringing the matter to Mrs. Fordyce's attention.

His was the gift of words, and he fluently pointed out that marriage being the most binding of all contracts should rest entirely on a business-basis. Then he went on to enumerate the advantages of the union he proposed, waxing eloquent in his earnest desire to make Mrs. Fordyce see the matter as he did.

She gave him her undivided attention, and, when he had finished, demonstrated her faculty of separating the basic idea

from the ornate verbiage in which it was clothed.

"You mean," she stated mildly, "that you want to marry me because I can cook?"

Now, as the Colonel put it, it certainly had not sounded like that. He stammered and stuttered a little, but was obliged to admit that such was the case.

"Oh," said Mrs. Fordyce, "I'm sorry. I'm afraid you've been laboring under a misapprehension. Agatha does all our cooking. She's head instructor in the cooking school, and she thinks it helps her to try things first at home. I thought you knew."

The Colonel gazed at her blankly. Agatha of the fluttering ruffles and dainty way a professional cook! It was unbelievable.

But curiously enough it was not of the delectable breakfasts and luncheons and dinners that would be Harold's portion and not his of which he was thinking.

It was the prospect of the sudden ending of his pleasant evening with Mrs. Fordyce; of cheerless days and companionless hearths that appalled him.

Indigestion! That was, at its worst, but a physical misfortune to be borne with what fortitude one might. But loneliness was a malady of the soul and not to be borne at all.

"Hang it!" the Colonel exploded, "I thought I wanted a cook, but I don't! I want a wife. I want *you*. And I don't care a continental if you don't know a cucumber from a cabbage!"

It was sometime later when the Colonel, radiantly happy and comfortably resigned to indigestion for the balance of his natural life, was saying a lingering, even tender, good-night that Mrs. Fordyce began nervously to twist a button on his coat.

"I think I forgot to mention—" she said, "that is, it might interest you to know that while Agatha really *does do* our cooking it was I who taught her how."



Parisian Fashion Model IX D—From Life

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Grunwaldt:—Stole and muff of black marten.



Parisian Fashion Model X D—From Life

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Barroin:—Directoire costume of gray cloth trimmed
with silk embroidery.



Parisian Fashion Model XI D—From Life

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Barroin:—Tailored Directoire costume of red liberty
silk trimmed with black satin.



Parisian Fashion Model XII D—From Life

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Martial et Armand:—Evening costume of gray silk
tulle trimmed with blue embroidery and black velvet.



Parisian Fashion Model XIII D—From Life

By special contract with Maison Rondeau:—Costume of black tulle trimmed with
REUTLINGER, PARIS gold embroidery.



Parisian Fashion Model XIV D—From Life

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Martial et Armand:—Costume of emerald green satin
trimmed with chinchilla and gold embroidery.



Parisian Fashion Model XV D—From Life

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Grunwaldt:—Black fur coat trimmed with black satin
and soutache.



Parisian Fashion Model XVI D—From Life

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Rondeau:—Tailored gown of maroon striped cloth
trimmed with black soutache.



Photograph by White, New York

Douglas Fairbanks as *Bob Haines* and Miss Lola May as *Hope Langdon* in Thomas Wise's and Harrison Rhodes' comedy, "The Gentleman From Mississippi"

SOME DRAMAS OF THE DAY

by
Louis V. De Foe

WHEN you find yourself in either of Mr. David Belasco's New York theatres with the curtain about to be lifted on a new play you instinctively take a firm grip on the arms of your orchestra-chair and prepare for a surprise.

Keen anticipation is the forerunner of a Belasco first-night, for this resourceful manager, who contrives always to surround the preparations of his plays with mystery, is constantly changing his tactics. Lively discussion is as certain to be its aftermath, for he is usually as

successful in achieving the unexpected. Mr. Belasco has learned his public and he knows how to whet its curiosity. His productions may not be above criticism but interest for the great majority of playgoers they are sure to hold.

This Autumn the opening event in the Stuyvesant Theatre was a little different from the others. The production of "The Fighting Hope" involved more than the success or failure of a play. It was to settle a long standing conjecture whether the abilities of Miss Blanche Bates, con-

ceded by all in exotic characters of romantic fancy, could adjust themselves to the more sober demands of a modern rôle. Without the aid of those wizard-like devices with which Mr. Belasco in other years had surrounded his star to intoxicate the senses and warp the point of view, Miss Bates was to rely entirely upon her own dramatic power and in a play, too, which involved only a single stage-setting and a cast of five characters.



Photograph by Hall, New York

Miss Lulu Glaser in "Mlle Mischief"

Once more Miss Bates fulfilled the promise of her manager and realized the highest expectations of her admirers. She came in for a brilliant success which was fairly and squarely earned, and a success the more creditable because she received only slight assistance from her play. It was not one of those greedy triumphs which sets in with the rise of the curtain. Instead, Miss Bates built character slowly and revealed herself in a gradual *crescendo* of power which, at the climax, flashed forth in a burst of passion so true, so convincing in its sincerity, yet held in such perfect control, that the first-night crowd was fairly swept off its feet. The twenty curtain-calls at the close of the play left no doubt that Miss Bates' acting in the tense experiences of a modern domestic tragedy is as potent as in the fanciful crises of romantic melodrama.

Compared with this exhibition of Miss Bates' histrionic resources, "The Fight-Hope" drops back into a place of secondary consideration. Its author is Mr. William J. Hurlbut, a young protégé of Mr. Belasco's whom kind fate snatched from the unknown and enthroned on a little pedestal in a single night. How much his first endeavor has benefited by its producer's ready pen and ripe experience is, of course, impossible to say but, throughout, the play shows many traces of having been built up in the characteristic Belasco method. In quality it bears a distinct family resemblance to "The Lion And The Mouse," "The Man Of The Hour," and "Paid In Full." In other words, its plot grows out of current conditions and events peculiar to American life. Its people are the people of to-day, under pressure of circumstances which apply to the present. It does not approach the dexterity or con-

centrated force of "Paid In Full," but its story is much more believable and considerably better told than "The Lion And The Mouse." Best of all, it is a capital acting-play, with incidents arranged to display the characters in a wide range of moods.

Especially well drawn is the leading character of *Anna Granger*, whose bitter experiences are the burden of the plot. She is the wife of a prison bird, *Robert Granger*, serving a term in Sing Sing for the over-certification of an account which wrecked the Gotham Trust Company, of which he was the cashier. Of *Granger's* complete innocence of crime, *Anna* has no doubt, and public opinion, which points to *Burton Temple*, the trust company's president, as the real culprit, is also strongly on her side. To vindicate her husband and wipe out the stain on her children's name *Anna*, when the play opens, secures employment under another name as a confidential secretary in *Temple's* home, in order to secure the evidence which she hopes will put the higher official in her husband's place behind the bars.

The wife's discoveries do not result as she had hoped. In *Temple*, a man of big nature and exceeding magnanimity, she recognizes one who had once been the object of her youthful ideals. But she stifles the old admiration and goes stealthily about her task. At last a letter, unearthed by the banker's detectives, falls into her hands, and from it she learns not only that he is completely innocent of the crime but that the verdict of the court in her husband's case was just. Yet an impulse of marital loyalty and the thought of her children leads her to burn this evidence of *Granger's*



Photograph by Bangs. New York

Edgar Selwyn in "Pierre of the Plains"

guilt. Then comes over her the sudden realization that her act has practically condemned to prison the man she has unconsciously grown to love.

The disappearance of the letter is discovered by *Temple* on the day that he declares his love for his secretary and offers to make her his wife. To his proposal only one reply is possible, and in a heart-broken torrent *Anna* reveals her true identity and admits the betrayal of her trust. But *Temple's* deep love strengthens his forbearance in the crisis and he leaves her alone.

Suddenly, through the door that leads from the library to the lawn, stalks *Granger*. He has escaped from prison and has come to *Temple's* home to im-

plore *Anna's* aid. The overwrought wife heaps bitter reproaches upon him, and he replies first with denials and then with vile insinuations against the meaning of her presence in his old employer's house. She is about to raise an alarm when the thought of her children again checks her impulse and leads her to conceal the fugitive in an adjoining room. The banker's lawyer arrives a moment later to dictate a letter, from which *Anna* learns the whole depravity of her husband's nature, for it reveals that the money he has stolen had been squandered by another woman. When the lawyer leaves she calls *Granger* from his hiding-place and assails him with all the fury of a woman scorned. He makes a weak defense, but at the sound of approaching footsteps dashes through the door. At the same moment a whistle is heard from the lawn, followed by a shot. Others rush in with the report that the fugitive has been shot by the pursuing prison-guards. The curtain falls and the inference is that *Anna's* fortunate widowhood will be followed in due course of time by a happier life as the wife of the financier she had first sought to destroy.

It was in the swiftly changing incidents of the final act that Miss Bates' emotional power displayed itself to best advantage. Her confession to *Temple* was genuinely pathetic and sympathetic in its appeal. Not, however, until her scene with *Granger* did her passion glow to white heat. It marked the climax of her acting, a veritable revelation of emotional force which could scarcely be excelled by any other actress on the native stage whom I am at present able to recall.

The other details of the play were quite in keeping with the Belasco traditions. Possibly the performance of the banker's cynical adviser by Mr. John W. Cope stood next to the star's in artistic finesse, although its keynote was humor. Mr. Charles Richman, as *Burton Temple*, presented an admirable bit of work, and Mr. Howell Hansel, as the felon, did much to enhance the real emotional value of the moving scene in which he appeared.

IN the matter of small casts and single settings Mr. Belasco, with "The Fighting Hope," is by no means alone in the list of the season's plays. Mr. Charles Frohman first set the fashion when he produced Mr. Hubert Henry Davies' bright comedy, "The Mollusc," which is still enjoying the popularity it deserves. More recently Mr. Henry Miller has brought out "Mater," at the Savoy, a comedy staged with equally meager accessories, in which Mr. Percy Mackaye departs from the serious dramas in verse which have been occupying his attention for several years and tries his hand at whimsical, semi-satirical prose-comedy. Nor is this classification of "Mater" exactly in accord with the author's, for he scorns the conventional nomenclature of dramatic writing and, it seems to me, rather pedantically describes his play as "an American study in comedy."

I confess I would be more in sympathy in Mr. Mackaye's endeavor if, after patient study of "Mater," I were able to form an approximately definite idea of what it is about. From appearances it is a *tour de force*, making use of the ordinary materials of comedy but hovering on the edge of scintillating absurdity. Sometimes it appears to vacillate between tragedy and farce. It contains a little of everything, except the one thing that is most expected in the theatre—and that one thing is drama. It is Barrie fantasy, but without Barrie's sure insight into human nature; Shaw satire, but without Shaw's whimsical cynicism. Among other things, it is a composite of much desultory reading of Shakespeare and the Greek classics on its author's part, for literary allusion is dragged into the dialogue by the ears on every possible pretext. Since it is somewhat unintelligible, some persons, of course, have imagined that it is a work of subtle art. For my part, I prefer to give Mr. Mackaye the benefit of the doubt and regard it as a good joke, although I cheerfully concede to it the occasional redeeming merits of poetic fancy, bright dialogue, and ingenious situations.

In any event "Mater" is based upon a three stanza text, composed by Mr. Mac-



Photograph Copyright 1907, by Frank Scott Clark, Detroit, Mich.

Miss Eleanor Robson from a private portrait



Photograph by Sarony, New York

Miss Isabel Irving appearing in "Mater" by Percy Mackaye

kaye, the first verse of which runs—or limps—as follows:

Long ago, in the young moonlight,
 I lost my heart to a hero:
 Strong and tender and stern and right,
 Darker than night,
 And terrier than Nero.
 Heigh, but he was dear O!
 And there, to bind our fellowship,
 I laughed at him; and a moment after,
 I laughed again till he bit his lip;
 For the test of love is laughter.

The remaining verses demonstrate that not only the "test," but also the "zest" and the "best" of love is laughter.

"Mater" is the name by which *Mrs. Dean* is affectionately called by her twin children, a pair of killjoys, one of whom, *Michael*, a visionary idealist and budding politician, is bent upon reforming the world and all that are in it, while *Mary* is immersed in Settlement-work and its attendant problems. *Mater* best describes them, herself, when she exclaims:

"See them there in a rosy cloud, the future Presidents of the United States and Vassar College! I wonder where I got them!"

All of which points to the fact that

Mater holds a monopoly in her family's sense of humor.

Among other virtues and accomplishments *Mrs. Dean* is a paragon of good sense, which is always exerted in a practical cause. Her husband, now dead, was a successful politician despite his own radical mania, which descended to his children. While professing to agree with him she, it is hinted, had been in the habit of smoothing his way in public life by coming to his rescue when astute political engineering was needed. And now she is prepared to perform a like service for her son, who is on the point of giving up his candidacy for the legislature because he is indignant at the hint of the *Hon. Arthur Cullen*, a practical politician, that he expected to contribute \$4,000 to the campaign corruption-fund.

Mrs. Dean's first meeting with *Cullen* had been at a thimble-party where, in the course of general introductions, he had confused mother and daughter, mistaking the young and volatile *Mrs. Dean* as the offspring of the plain and prosaic *Mary*. The former's beauty and amiability had immediately fascinated the impressionable bachelor and

tempted him into a proposal of marriage. By dangling her elderly suitor at the end of a string *Mrs. Dean* not only saw a means of enlisting *Cullen's* efforts in

her son's behalf but also of relieving him of the campaign-tax. The only difficulty she encountered in her conspiracy was the jealousy aroused in *Rudolph Verplank*, *Mary's* sweetheart, who suspected that *Cullen's* courtship was being directed toward his fiancée.

In a series of ingenious and amusing situations *Mater's* mental alertness always came to the rescue to ward off *Cullen's* disillusionment until after the election was over. Then, *Michael's* victory at the polls having been won, she let *Cullen* into the secret of her masquerade and with a laugh dismissed him, invoking his sense of humor to break his abrupt fall from the rosy clouds of romantic bliss. The lesson was not lost upon *Michael*, who was brought to a realizing sense of his own folly, while *Mary*, elated at her brother's election, discarded

her black frock for one of white and gave her heart to her jealous lover.

If Mr. Mackaye meant to satirize dishonesty in politics in "*Mater*" he missed his point altogether, for the gloomy



Photograph by White, New York

Miss Louise Gunning in "*Marcelle*"



Photograph by Bangs, New York

CHAUNCEY OLCOTT
Starring in "Ragged Robin"

idealist, *Michael Dean*, became, in the end, the most contemptible of opportunists—the kind that exalts his own honesty, yet is willing to profit by the dishonesty of another. If he intended to sing a pæan to motherhood in the character of the youthful, magnetic, and practical *Mater*—*Mrs. Dean*—he ruined his cause by making her both in intent and accomplishment a liar. And no character in the whole domain of the theatre so quickly repels all sympathetic interest as a lying mother.

"There must be a joke in here, somewhere," remarks *Cullen* just before the last curtain falls. There must, indeed. Perhaps, as I have suggested, it was on the audience.

Its oddity has won "*Mater*" a degree of attention. It is a departure, at least, from the stereotyped form of plays. The acting, too, is quite efficient with Miss Isabel Irving as *Mater*, Mr. Frederick Lewis and Miss Hazel Mackaye as the twins, and Mr. Charles A. Stevenson as the *Hon. Arthur Cullen*.

TO "A Gentleman From Mississippi" may be given the distinction of being a drama of political graft that is content to teach its corrective lesson wholly by inference, if, indeed, it is written with a moral purpose at all. That is the way it should be in the theatre. None who respect the stage will underestimate its value as a moral agent, but even those who respect it most will be the first to balk at turning it into a pulpit.

There is always a place in New York for plays of the type of "A Gentleman From Mississippi," and this new comedy of life at the national capital, by Mr. Harrison Rhodes and Mr. Thomas A. Wise, is filling its niche admirably. Unless I greatly mistake the temper of audiences this year, it will prove the longest lived of the season's new plays. It is filled with the familiar types of Washington political life that have a perpetual humorous interest. Its characters are amiably drawn and its incidents are lively and diverting. It has a good story, even if it is not very well told. When its machinery does not move on oiled wheels the author, somehow, contrives to raise a laugh which drowns the creaking.

You catch the flavor of the piece the moment "*Bill*" *Langdon*, the new junior senator from Mississippi, slouches into the International Hotel with his two daughters and sprawls his corpulent body over the register. Having inscribed his name he proceeds to make friends with the cigar-counter clerk and then inquires anxiously the way to the bar. "*Bill*," you see, is a Southerner of the old school, a chevalier in rusty broadcloth and a slouch hat, with a thirst as strong as his principles of integrity.

"*Bill*" is a stranger to the slippery ethics of the lobby "ring." He has come up to Washington to do the right thing by his constituents back in his native state, but not having cut his political wisdom-teeth, he is at loss as to the best way to go about it. The first lucky thing that happens to him is to fall in with "*Bud*" *Haines*, the bright young correspondent of a New York newspaper. When "*Bill*" gravely tells "*Bud*," in the course of the interview, that "New York



Photograph by White, New York

Thomas Wise and Miss Harriet Worthington in "The Gentleman from Mississippi"



Photograph by Morrison, Chicago

Miss Olive Wyndham appearing in "The Man From Home"

is the Vicksburg of the North," friendly relations between the pair are established, and then the newspaperman accepts the junior senator's proposition to become his private secretary.

Next the bill for the new naval station at Altacoola on the Gulf comes up. The junior senator has visions of a great ship-building industry down in Mississippi. The senior senator from his state favors it. So does the congressman who is engaged to his daughter. A shady senator

from Pennsylvania is another of its supporters. Will Langdon favor it? "Why, surely, sir."

But "*Bud*" scents a crooked deal. He is convinced of it when the "ring" comes around and offers him a chance to buy Altacoola real estate at inside prices. He also finds out that the junior senator's son and elder daughter have been persuaded to invest in choice Altacoola corner-lots with money raised from a mortgage on the Langdon plantation.



Photograph by Sarony, New York

Miss Virginia Harned

The "ring" at the same time discovers what "*Bud*" secretly knows and it gets to the junior senator first. Then comes a break between the Southern statesman and his secretary, when the latter tells him that his own family fortune has been invested in a dishonest deal. What hurts "*Bud*" most is that he has fallen in love

with the worthy senator's other daughter.

After a little sober thought *Langdon* begins to wake up. He sees "*Bud*" again and the secretary proves to him that he has been made a cat's-paw of the senior senator and his friends.

"My colleague is as honest as the day is long!" roars Senator *Langdon*.



Photograph by Sykes, Chicago
Pauline Anthony, leading lady with Robert Edson

"But the days grow shorter as congress meets," replies "*Bud*."

That hint is enough. "*Bud*" gets back his job as secretary and *Langdon* prepares to wade into the "ring." He swears by the Delta of Mississippi that he will set off an explosion on the floor of the senate next day which will shake down the dome.

When the senator cools down "*Bud*" inquires what he intends to do.

"Damfiknow!" admits *Langdon* in perspiration.

But he does it and puts the ring to rout by the easiest of tactics. He calls the grafters together, tells them he is going to make a speech in which he will say that, with other loyal citizens of Mississippi, he has bought up Altacoola property with the intention of turning it over to the State at a minimum price, and dares them to deny it. The trick works, and out of the stampede of the grafters comes forth the junior senator in triumph. Of course "*Bud*" is soon enrolled in the family as a son-in-law.

Mr. Thomas A. Wise, as *Senator Langdon*, gives a mellow, richly varied impersonation which is tuned to a fine quality of humor. Mr. Douglas Fairbanks, as "*Bud*" *Haines*, is the most likable and natural newspaper-reporter I have ever seen on the stage. All the other masculine characters—senators, congressmen, broken-down politicians, hotel hangers-on and lobbyists—are peculiarly true to life. In the drawing of the feminine rôles the authors show their weakness. This does not matter much, though, for women have little to do with the story.

A ROSE by any other name is just as sweet, so it matters not a bit that in "*M'lle Mischief*" I recognize "*The Girl In The Barracks*," which Miss Clara Lipman played not wisely nor too well all of three years ago. Now the farce is festooned in melodies, shot through with lyrics, and trussed out with song and dance, and in its musical comedy disguise is quite the best medium for the hoydenish capers of Miss Lulu Glaser that she has had for more seasons than I would dare to mention. Besides, Viennese



Photograph by Moffett Studios, Chicago

Miss Mabel Taliaferro playing in "Polly of the Circus"

operetta, thanks to "The Merry Widow," is in high favor in the theatrical court just now, and "M'lle Mischief," plus Kraatz and Von Sterk, the composers, and minus Mr. Sydney Rosenfeld, the adapter of the book, is Viennese—at least it is reputed to be.

Miss Glaser has calmed her obstreperous manner almost to human propor-

tions. She also sings better than in the past. First in a black frock and a Gainsborough hat, next in a brown business-suit of unimpeachable fit, then in the baggy suit of an Austrian army recruit, and finally in a Directoire gown that sheds a benediction over all the rest she is a moving picture of physical energy, a mad-cap on a rampage, and, to many,

an unadulterated joy. The piece fairly cackles with animation when she is on the stage—and she is never off it, save when she is changing her gowns—or, beg pardon, her trousers.

Mlle Mischief is, otherwise, *Rosette*, an artists' model. She makes a wager that she can stay overnight in the barracks of Fremstadt disguised as a boy and aided by the conscript papers she steals from *Freddie Meline*. She wins, of course, but many are her experiences. First of all, brave *Lieutenant Baritone* orders her to take a bath—more than that, he volunteers to turn on the shower.

"But, but—" objects *Mlle Mischief*.

"But, what?" thunders the *Lieutenant*.

"But—but this is only Thursday!" whimpers *Mlle Mischief* in her boy's clothes.

The argument floors the lieutenant. Who in Austria ever dreamed of taking a bath, except on Saturday night?

It requires three acts for *Mlle Mischief* to get into the Fremstadt barracks and out again. Her escapade is accomplished without shock to the audience, and at the last curtain her daring wins her a husband in the artist with whom she has long been in love.

Most of the score has an attractive swing, although none of the songs has a quality that will entitle it to live longer than the Winter. There are fifteen numbers in all, two of which, interpolated for the star, might better have been omitted. Indeed, the singing favors go, not to Miss Glaser, but to Miss Gertrude Darrell whose "*Le Coeur de Ninon*" and "*My Own Vienna*" are charming.

AS a cocktail to be taken before Mr. Hubert Henry Davies' comedy, "*The Mollusc*," Miss May Irwin is appearing in "*Mrs. Peckham's Carouse*." It is only a one-act piece—one of that brood, the very name of which carries with it the aroma of the variety-halls, but it is excruciatingly funny and all New York is laughing at it. As for Miss Irwin, she not only plays *Mrs. Peckham*, she actually is *Mrs. Peckham*. She is on the stage all the time and her performance is quite as amusing as anything she has ever done.

Mrs. Peckham is the president of the W.C.T.U. of a Western town, sworn to the sacred duty of chasing the Demon Rum off the face of the earth. She hasn't quite reformed *Mr. Peckham*, who is a well-meaning and semi-temperate lawyer, but she is in a fair way of accomplishing the task, when temptation confronts him in the form of a demijohn of forty-year-old whisky, a present from a brother in Kentucky.

How *Mrs. Peckham*, in an evil moment, surprises *Mr. Peckham* and a friend with the demijohn between them and how she pursues and upbraids them until, at the appearance of the other man's wife, the tables are turned upon her and, in indignation, she falls in a fainting-fit, are only parts of the story.

Something must be done to revive the swooned temperance advocate, and that, too, quickly. The whisky is at hand—and forty-year-old, high-proof, Kentucky bourbon has its powers. Two glasses of it are poured between the unresisting lips of the inanimate leader of the W.C.T.U.

Then the jag! The sunshine of ineffable bliss lights up the temperance lady's countenance. Her lips relax in pointless laughter. Her eyes shine dully through their half-closed lids like ship's lights through a fog. Her hands fan the air in uncertain gestures. And over it all—the esteemed lady's maudlin dignity—*Mrs. Peckham*, bless her, is at last having the time of her life!

But it's no use to describe her. One must see *Mrs. Peckham* in her cups to fully appreciate her.

It is a mighty clever performance that Miss Irwin gives: so clever, indeed, that Mr. Charles Frohman intends to send her to London shortly to see what will be the effect on the risibles of John Bull. If she doesn't make all England's sides shake, nothing manufactured in America can.

OUR young playwrights who keep their ears close to the ground have lately begun to harken to the call of the North, perhaps the one section of the American continent that hitherto has escaped the invasion of the dramatic pathfinder. But their first explorations



Photograph by Otto Sarony Co., New York

MRS. FISKE

In her new play she appears as a scrubwoman

of this primal wilderness have not been without casualties. The De Mille brothers were lost in its trackless forests last Spring when they wrote "The Royal Mounted," dealing with the Canadian Mounted Police, for Mr. Cyril Scott, and the intrepid Mr. Eugene Walter barely got back to civilization a little later when he ventured into the Hudson Bay Company's territory in search of the plot for "The Wolf." Already this season Mr. George Broadhurst's dramatization of Mr. Stuart Edward White's novel, "Conjuror's House," has proved no sure refuge for Mr. Robert Edeson, but at last has come "Pierre Of The Plains," in which Mr. Edgar Selwyn has succeeded in bringing something of the crisp, bracing air of the Northland to the stage.

The play takes its inspiration from Sir Gilbert Parker's novel, "Pierre And His People," but it is no less a capital acting-drama on its own account. It may not have the subtlety that is calculated to impress sophisticated audiences, but it offers all the merits of exciting action and well sustained suspense, and it is rich in a varied assortment of rugged, picturesque characters who appeal strongly to the imagination. It is much superior to the ordinary dramatized novel, for full enjoyment of it does not presuppose an acquaintance with the original story.

Mr. Selwyn's success is two-fold, since he also acts the character of *Pierre*, his hero, a renegade half-breed and gambler, held in unsavory repute by the settlers along the Canadian frontier of Montana, but a likable, magnetic daredevil, whose numerous moral shortcomings are more than counterbalanced by his physical courage and loyalty to his friends. It is *Pierre's* devotion to *Val Galbraith*, for the sake of a hopeless, secret affection he holds for his sister, *Jen*, that gives the play its strong motive and leads through a succession of exciting adventures to a thrilling hand-to-hand combat between the half-breed and his Nemesis, a trooper in the mounted police, which would furnish a fitting climax for any melodrama. The men meet on a precipice in a lonely forest and settle their long standing feud with

pistols and knives. The strategy of the half-breed wins in the end and his opponent is hurled, head foremost, over the cliff. *Pierre* emerges from victory to renunciation, for he gives up his friend's sister to the man she loves and, himself, becomes a fugitive from the law.

Mr. Selwyn makes an engaging, picturesque figure, if not always a plausible one, of *Pierre*. He does not bring to the character a very great variety of moods although he contrives to make it deeply sympathetic in its appeal. The other frontier types are all excellently portrayed. Of feminine interest the play has little, notwithstanding that its attractions will be principally for that sex. But Miss Elsie Ferguson, who impersonates *Jen Galbraith*, the innocent cause of the story's constant turmoil, acts with sure touches of emotion and tender appeal.

THE Golden Butterfly" has emerged from a chrysalis of comic opera to prove that the muses of Mr. Reginald de Koven and Mr. Harry B. Smith, which once blended so successfully in the productions of the old Bostonians, have not lost their power to charm after years of silence. Nothing that either the composer or librettist has done independently in late years has had the richness of harmony and fineness of texture that their present work reveals and the opera, thanks to an unusually efficient company headed by Miss Grace Van Studdiford, promises to succeed to the place in the public fancy monopolized so long by "The Merry Widow."

Mr. de Koven, as in the past, twangs his lyre in a romantic mood, and Mr. Smith, with the story of the poor French composer whose opera is stolen by a Hungarian plagiarist, but who recovers it and wins its *prima donna* for his wife, supplies him just the needed inspiration. The libretto is spirited, yet not extravagant, and it is woven throughout with the threads of a pretty romance. The score is round and full, with haunting waltz-melodies that lull the senses and swinging climaxes that fire the imagination. Mr. de Koven's vein, in fact, is uniformly delightful, though it does not stray far from comic opera traditions.